

THE OBJECTIVE OF CHRIST'S DEATH NO. 2483

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1896.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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“Who gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”
Galatians 1:4, 5.

THE apostle Paul, in his writings, is notable for the fact that he scarcely ever mentions the name of the Lord Jesus Christ without pausing to praise and bless Him. There are many benedictions and hallelujahs in Paul's Epistles which might have been omitted so far as the run of the sense is concerned, but not one of them could be omitted because his heart was so aglow with love to his Divine Master that he only needed to mention that dear name, and out burst his praises in a second! Brethren, let us all try to keep a heart like the apostle's—so full of love to Christ that we have only to come across His track, and we shall at once fall down and worship and adore Him or, upon the wings of holy love mount up nearer to His throne.

I am quite sure that when Paul was writing the Epistle to the Galatians, he was eager to get at his task. The Galatians had turned aside from the gospel of God's grace, and Paul was in dead earnest to bring them back to the grand truth of the doctrine of salvation and justification by faith in Christ. He was burning to get at his work of trying to win them back to the old paths, but it seemed necessary and courteous to begin with a salutation. In that salutation occurred the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, so off went the apostle! Earnest as he was to get to the special subject on which he was about to write, he felt that he must tarry a while, and write a little to the honor of his Divine Master. So we read, “grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” Then He gets at the business he has in hand—“I marvel that you are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ to another gospel: which is not another; but there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ,” and so on. He is red-hot upon that subject, yet he must stop a minute or two to pen some few words of praise to his glorious Lord and Savior. The old proverb says, “Prayer and provender hinder no man's journey.” And to stop a little while, to praise and bless the name of Jesus Christ, hinders no man's argument! Whatever it is that you have to do, if your Master shall cross your path, pause a while and praise Him as best you can. When Mary sat at Christ's feet, she was not wasting her time, she was employing it then to the highest possible profit! And when you and I get away from the Master's work to think of our Lord, Himself, and to praise Him, and commune with Him, we are by no means wasting our time! We are gathering strength, and laying it out to the best possible purpose with regard to our future work and warfare.

I can see the great wisdom of the apostle in acting in such a fashion as this. He is about to write to these Galatians concerning their leaving the gospel—what is the best way to make them sorry for turning aside from the faith? Why, to set before them Jesus Christ, Himself, who is the very essence and glory of the gospel! I have heard of one who preached much against certain errors, but there was another servant of the Lord who never preached against those errors, but who always proclaimed the gospel right out straight—and when one asked him why he did not attack the errors, he said, “I do preach against them most effectually. If there is a crooked stick about, and you want to show how many crooks there are in it, you need not do anything except lay a straight one down by the side of it—and the crookedness of the other stick will be detected at once.” So the apostle admires, extols, and adores the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus, in the best possible manner, introduces what he has to say concerning the errors of the Galatians. Oh, for a burst of sunlight from the face of Christ! Then would the shadows of today soon fly away! They who have never seen Him may love modern novelties and falsehoods, but if they have beheld His face, and have been won by His charms, they will hold that He who is the same yesterday, to-

day, and forever, is infinitely to be preferred to all the inventions of men! I could say no less than this when I noticed the position in which our text is placed.

But now let us come to the text itself. To my mind it contains four things. First, *what our Lord Jesus Christ aimed at with regard to His people*—"that He might deliver us from this present evil world." Secondly, *what our Lord has done to secure this end*—"Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world." Thirdly, *why He did it*—"According to the will of God and our Father." And fourthly, *what we shall say concerning it*—"To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

I. First, then, WHAT DID OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST AIM AT WITH REGARD TO HIS PEOPLE?

To preserve them from going down into the pit? To rescue them from hell? To bring them to heaven? Yes, all that, but more than that! His great objective with regard to His people is to deliver them from this present evil world. We are living in this present evil world, and as Paul called it by that name, we need not alter the phrase, for we cannot help knowing that it is *still* an evil world. And in it are God's redeemed and chosen people, by nature part and parcel of that world, equally fallen, equally estranged from God, equally set on mischief, equally certain to go down into the pit of destruction if left to themselves. The objective of Christ is to carve out a people from this great brook of stone—it is His purpose to find His own people who were given to Him before the earth was—and to deliver them from the bondage and the slavery in which they are found in this Egypt, of which they seem to form a part, though to the eyes of Christ they are always as separate and distinct as the Israelites were when they dwelt in the land of Goshen.

What does the apostle mean by saying that the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world?

First, Christ came that He might *deliver His people from this common condemnation of this present evil world*. This is the City of Destruction which is to be burned with fire, and Christ's business is to fetch His people out of it. Therefore He sends His evangelists to cry to them, "Flee from the wrath to come! Tarry not in the city, but escape for your lives—you are in a doomed world which will certainly be destroyed—therefore, flee to the only shelter from the coming storm." The Lord desires that we should be so clear of this world that when it is condemned, we may not share in the condemnation. It is Christ's purpose to bring us into a state of justification before God, through His blood and righteousness, that we may not perish in the common wreck in the day when the world shall be consumed with fire, but that we may have our ark wherein, as righteous Noah was preserved from the deluge of water, we may be saved from the fiery floods of divine wrath. The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world that He might deliver us from that condemnation which now rests upon all the race of Adam except those who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel.

But He came with this further purpose, *to deliver us from the condition in which the world is found*. In Paul's day the world was in a horrible state. Then the slave was chained to his master's door, like a dog, and slept at night in a hole under the stairs—and the slave's master indulged in all kinds of debauchery and sin. The cruelty of the Romans satisfied itself with gladiatorial shows where men murdered each other to make a public holiday. Christ came to gather out a people even from among these abominations—and He did gather them out—a holy people who could not, and would not live as the rest of the world lived! They did not go away into the deserts, or hide themselves in caves, living as hermits, but they went up and down in the earth, attending faithfully to the duties of daily life, yet everywhere marked as differing from other men. Their moral tone—their whole thought about the things of this world, and the next—was altogether different from that of the rest of mankind, for Christ had come to draw them out of the kennel of iniquity in which others lived like beasts, to lift them up out of the bog of sin, and make them to be a pure-minded, holy, kind, generous, loving people who should be like their Master, Jesus Christ! For this purpose, the Savior died. He thought it worth His while, even, to die upon the cross that He might thereby make a better, purer, nobler, more unselfish, more devout people than as yet had appeared in the Roman or Jewish world. And this is what He is still doing in this present evil world! He is lifting up men and women out of the filthiness in which they have been wallowing—making them love holiness, purity, temperance—and hate all that is evil in the sight of God.

This, then, is the great objective of Christ's death—to deliver us from the world's condemnation, and to deliver us from the world's condition.

He also came *to deliver us from the world's customs*. There are many things which a worldling does which a Christian cannot do. I need not enlarge upon the tricks in trade which are all too common in the present day, but if you are Christ's own, I charge you, do not even *think* of them, but let your course be straight as an arrow's, and let your conscience be clean as the driven snow! It is not for God's people to

say, "It is the custom of the trade, so we may do it." What have you to do with that? It is the custom of the trade to ruin men's souls, but the churches of God have no such custom, nor have those who follow closely after the Lord Jesus Christ. He has come on purpose that we may not conform to the sinful fashions of men, but that we may have a way of our own, or rather, that we may make Christ's way the way of holiness, to be our way.

Hence, He has come to *deliver us from the spirit of the world*. The spirit of the world is, "I can swim. So, if everybody else is drowned, there will then be the more room for me." "I fight for my own hand," says the worldling, "and if, in the process, I crush the widow and the fatherless, I cannot help that—they should not get in my way." The rules of political economy do not permit of anything like mercy—they are as inflexible as the laws of nature. They are something after this fashion—"Grind down the poor, and get as much as you can out of them for as little money as possible. Care for nobody but yourself. Mind the main chance. Make money, honestly, if you can, but if not, make it anyway, only keep clear of the law, for it would be a mistake to fall into its clutches." Now, Christ has come to gather out of the world a people who will not be possessed with this detestable spirit, but who will resolve to live for others rather than for themselves. We are to consider those who are around us, and to think what influence our conduct will have upon them. We are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul, strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. We are to love even our enemies. We are to do good to the unthankful, and to the evil. We are, in all ways, and according to the measure of our ability, to copy the example of our Father who is in heaven, who makes His sun to shine and His rain to fall upon the evil as well as upon the good. O friends, look what Christ has come to do—even to separate to Himself a people like Himself out of this present evil world!

Yet once more, He will do this *by delivering us from all fear of this world*. What a great many of you there are who dare not do anything but what society agrees should be done! If society says, "This is the right thing to do," you call it "etiquette," and you do that particular thing. Then all the people around you are very respectable, and you want to be counted respectable—and the consequence is that you dare not call your souls your own, and you do not act as you would wish to until you have first asked your neighbors' permission. There are multitudes of people still in the condition of abject slavery to those who are around them! But when Christ came into the world, He gathered out of the world a people who were not afraid of anybody. After His good Spirit had renewed them, they walked about fearless of the greatest earthly potentates! There was the great Emperor of Rome, for instance, and who dared ever contradict what the Emperor of Rome said? The man who wrote our text did! And Paul before Nero is a vastly greater man than the cruel tyrant upon the throne. When they bring the saints before the judgment seat, the Roman consul says, "Offer sacrifice to idols. You know the law—take that incense and put it on the altar, this very moment." One of the guards says, "Sir, this man is obstinate and rebellious. I have told him what he is to do, but he refuses." The consul says, "Do you, impious wretch, refuse to worship Jupiter? Put that incense on the altar this moment, or you shall be torn in pieces with hot irons." The man before him replies, "I am a Christian." "Is that your answer?" "Yes, sir, my only answer. I am a Christian." "Then tear him with the pincers! Let him learn what my hot irons can do." They do it, and the brave saint bears it. Perhaps a groan escapes his lips, for flesh is frail, but when he is asked again, "Will you worship Jupiter?" He replies as before, "I am a Christian." "To the lions with him, then! To the lions with him," cries the enraged persecutor, and he is taken off to the amphitheatre. But as that poor simple peasant walks across the arena, the wild beasts, themselves, seem cowed before him, and though he is soon torn in pieces, everybody goes home from the amphitheatre saying, "What a strange being that man was! He seemed utterly devoid of fear!"

Yes, the early Christians were without fear, and without reproach, for Christ came to set them free from fear of this present evil world.

O brothers and sisters, were the martyrs as brave as this, and are we going to yield to whatever laws and rules the world lives to lay down for us? Do we mean to believe its current theology, or philosophy, and do or not do as it may dictate? For my part, "I would as well not be as live to be in awe of such a thing as I myself." Since Christ has given me my liberty, I am His servant, and whether I am in fashion or out of fashion is no concern of mine so long as I please Him! Dear friends, let it be so with you, I pray you, and may the Lord daily divide you more and more from the world so that, at home or abroad, everybody can see that you are not of the world! Love men, seek their good, and in the highest and best sense be far more loving to the world than the world is to itself, but still, fear it not. Why should you? It is "the present evil world" which "lies in the wicked one." It is for you bravely to bear your protest against the world every day you live, for to this end did Christ come to this earth, "that He might deliver us from this present evil world."

II. We have seen what our Lord aimed at by His death. Now, secondly, **WHAT DID CHRIST DO TO THIS END**—to deliver us from this present evil world?

The answer of the text is, "*He gave Himself.*" I will not say that He gave His royal crown, that diadem which did outshine the sun. I will not say that He laid aside His azure vest, and hung it on the sky as He came down to earth. I will not say that He gave up for us the thrones and royalties of heaven. You know that He did all this and far more—nor need I remind you that, when upon earth, He gave up all that He had, even to His last garment, for they parted His raiment among them, and for His vesture they cast lots. I need not say that He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, nor that He gave His hands to the nails, and His feet to the cruel iron. I need not say that He gave His body, His soul, and His spirit, for you have it all in these three words—"He gave Himself."

"He gave Himself *for our sins.*" That is the wonder of Christ's death! Our sins could not be put away except by His dying in our place. There was no expiation of our sin, and consequently no deliverance from its condemnation except by Christ's bearing in our place, that wrath of God which was due to us—and He did it. "He gave Himself for our sins." I need not say more upon that point except just this. Do not, I pray you, let us permit Him in any sense or measure to fail in His supreme objective. "He gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world," therefore, out of gratitude to Him, if for no other reason, let us not be of the world, or like the world, servants of the world, slaves of the world. What? Did Christ die to deliver us from the world, and do we go back to it, and deliberately put our necks under the world's yoke, wear the world's yoke, and become, again, the world's slaves? I am ashamed of myself, and of you whenever we, for a moment, act as the ungodly world acts, and become as the world is—self-seeking, rebellious against God's will, living contrary to the divine law of Christ. Oh, let every drop of blood He shed on Calvary purge you from all resemblance to the world! Let the dying Savior's cries move you to hate the sin which the world loves! From Calvary, hear Him cry, "Come out from among them, and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." By the blood with which He bought you, be you not of the world, seeing that He has redeemed you from among men that you might be altogether His own!

How does the death of Christ deliver us from the world? It does this *by removing from us the condemnation of our sin.* Having borne our sins in His own body on the tree, Christ has forever freed us from the penalty that was our due. You know that is the very essence of the gospel, and you also know that I preach this truth of God every time I stand here, so I need not enlarge upon it now.

Christ has also delivered us from the world *by making sin hateful to us.* We say to ourselves, "Did sin kill Christ? Then we cannot play with that dagger that stabbed our Lord! How can we be friendly with the world that cast Him out, and hanged Him on a tree? O murderous sin, how can I give you lodging in my heart when you killed the altogether lovely One?" Men speak hard things of regicide, but what shall I say of *deicide*? And sin is that *deicide* which slew the Christ of God! Yet, marvel of marvels, by that death on the cross He has crucified us to the world, and the world to us, and so He has delivered us from this present evil world!

I may add that Christ has also delivered us from the world *by the splendor of His example in giving Himself to die for His enemies,* and by the glory of His infinite merit whereby He purchased back that image of God in Adam which sin had obliterated. He gave Himself, the very image of God, and more than that, *God Himself,* that He might give back to us that image of God which long ago we had lost. Thus has Christ delivered us from this present evil world! Judge, sirs, whether He has thus delivered you.

III. Time flies, therefore I must hasten on to the third question which is, **WHY DID CHRIST DO THIS?**

First, because our holiness was included in the purpose of God. The text says, "According to the will of God and our Father." Mr. Charles Simeon used to say that there were some, in his day, who thought that the very word, "predestination," sounded almost like blasphemy. And I have no doubt that there are some left who cannot bear to hear of the will, and the purpose of God! But to us these words sound like sweetest music! I do not believe that there ever would have been a man delivered from this present evil world if it had not been according to the will, the purpose, the *predestination* of God, even our Father! It needs a mighty tug to get a man away from the world. It is a miracle for a man to live in the world, and yet not to be of it—it is a continuous miracle of so vast a kind that I am sure it would never have been worked if it had not been according to the will of God our Father. Yet so it stood in the divine decree, that there should be a people chosen from among men—a people who would be called out from among the mass of the ungodly, who would be drawn by supernatural power to follow after that which is right, and good, and holy. A people who would be washed in the blood of Jesus, and renewed by the Holy

Spirit in the spirit of their minds, and therefore should be a peculiar people in the world, but not of it—the people of God set apart to Himself, to be His, now, and His, hereafter, forever, and ever! I delight to remember that this is the will of God, even our sanctification, our separation from the world!

Now I want to push home this truth of God into your very hearts. If this is, indeed, the purpose of God, let us see to it, my brothers and sisters, every one of us, that we *fulfill that purpose in our daily lives*. Let us come out from the world more clear and straight than we have ever done. I believe that there would be much more persecution than there is if there were more real Christians. But we have become so like the world, that the world does not hate us as it once did. If we would be more just, more upright, more true, more Christ-like, more godly, we would soon hear all the dogs of hell baying with all their might against us! But what of that? It would just be the fulfillment of the divine purpose, and God would be well pleased with us. Come, then, and let us fall back upon the omnipotent strength which always slumbers within the divine will. Lord, if it is Your will, fulfill it in me! If this is Your purpose, accomplish it in me! Oh, what brave men and women those early saints were! I do not wonder that our friend cried out, just now, when I depicted the martyr—but there were tens of thousands of such holy men and women in the days of persecution! Have you never heard of her whom they set in a red-hot iron chair because she would not turn away from Christ, or of that other poor feeble woman who was tossed on the horns of bulls, but who, nevertheless, spoke up right bravely for her Master as she came to die? Yes, and there have been boys and girls, who, for Christ's sake, sooner than sin, have braved the most fearful deaths! Remember John Bunyan when he refused to give up preaching? They put him in prison, and said to him, "Mr. Bunyan, you can come out of prison whenever you will promise to cease preaching the gospel." He said, "If you let me out of prison today, I will preach again tomorrow, by the grace of God." "Well," they said, "then you must go back to prison," and he answered, "I will go back and stay there, if necessary, till the moss grows on my eyelids, but I will never deny my Master." This was the stuff of which the godly were made then! May the Lord make many of us to be like they—men and women who cannot, and will not do that which is evil, but will, in the name of God, stand to the right and the true, come what may!

IV. Lastly, WHAT SHALL WE SAY CONCERNING IT ALL? Why, just this, "To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

First, *God is glorified in Christ's death*. Has the Father given His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us? Then there is glory enough in Jesus Christ upon the cross to last throughout eternity! Fix your eyes upon that bleeding Savior—behold the glorious justice of God in laying guilt on Him, punishing it on Him, and behold, also, the inconceivable love of God in thus putting His Only-Begotten to death that we might live through Him! You need not range the world around to see the glory of God in nature, though that is a delightful employment, for there is enough glory in the cross of Christ to last throughout all eternity. The apostle says, "To whom be glory forever and ever." How long that is, I cannot tell. "Forever" is without any end, but Paul says, "Forever *and* ever," and there is glory enough in the cross of Christ to last forever and ever, as long as the Eternal Jehovah, Himself, exists!

Well, then, has Jesus Christ delivered us from the world? Have we fled to Him, and been pardoned? Are we accepted in the Beloved? Then *let us begin to glorify God now*. Let us glorify His dear Son. Let us praise Him. Let every beat of our heart proclaim our joyous thankfulness, and so continually yield sweet music to God. I would that every breath were like a verse of a psalm, and our whole life an endless hallelujah to His glory!—

*"I would begin the music here,
And so my soul should rise!
Oh for some heavenly notes to bear
My passions to the skies,"*

for it is, indeed, a subject of great praise to be separated from the world, and to be made holy to the Lord.

But, brothers and sisters, *when you once begin the music, never stop* because, as the apostle says, glory is to be given to God, "forever and ever." I saw, last week, a brother from the backwoods of America, and he said to me, "Twenty years ago I was in your vestry, and you did me much good by something that you said to me." I asked, "What did I say?" And the good man replied, "You said, 'Brother, as a minister, there are two occasions upon which you ought to preach Jesus Christ.' I inquired, 'What are those two occasions?' You answered, 'In season and out of season.'" Well now, there are two occasions upon which we ought to praise God—"in season, and out of season!" Praise Him when you feel like praising, and when you do not feel like it—praise Him till you do! When you can say—

"I feel like singing all the time,"

then sing! And when you say, "I do not feel like singing," make a point of singing just to let the devil know that he is not your master! It is a good thing to praise Christ in the presence of His friends. It is, sometimes, a better thing to extol Him in the presence of His enemies. It is a great thing to praise Jesus Christ by day, but there is no music sweeter than the nightingale's—and she praises God by night. It is well to praise the Lord for His mercy when you are in health, but make sure that you do it when you are sick, for then your praise is more likely to be genuine. When you are deep down in sorrow, do not rob God of the gratitude that is due to Him—never stint Him of His revenue of praise whatever else goes short. Praise Him, sometimes, on the high-sounding cymbals—crash, crash—with all your heart and being. But when you cannot do that, just sit and give Him praise in solemn silence in the deep quiet of your spirit. To be redeemed from a dying world, to be fetched out from a condemned world, to be brought out from slavery, to be made a child of God is enough to make you emulate the angels, and even to excel them! They cannot rise to so high a pitch of gratitude as you ought to reach, even now, and ought to keep up all the days of your life—and then, "forever and ever" in the presence of the King.

O you poor souls who are still in the world, God help you to get out of it! O you who are lost and ruined, there is no hope for you but in Jesus Christ our Savior! Tell all men about Him, brothers and sisters! You who are saved, talk about Christ everywhere! Let no man whom you ever meet be without a knowledge of the way of salvation. "I do not know what to say," says one. "I do not yet know much about it myself." Do not say it, then, if you do not know it! But, if you do know it, proclaim it! If you have tasted and handled it, proclaim it as best you can—in broken English, if in no other style—

***"Proclaim to sinners round
What a dear Savior you have found."***

So, even through you, the purpose for which Christ bled shall be accomplished, that is, the severance of His elect from the great mass of mankind among whom they lie, and this shall be to the praise of the glory of His grace forever and ever! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: JOHN 17.

This matchless chapter contains that great intercessory prayer of Christ for His people which may most properly be called "the Lord's prayer."

Verse 1. *These words spoke Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You.*

What a sight it must have been to see the Divine Intercessor in this, His last great prayer before He poured out His soul to death! We can never read this chapter so as fully to enter into its meaning, for there must always be in it a depth far greater than our experience can fathom. A man must die and enter heaven before he can fully realize all that Christ meant when He said, "Father, the hour is come; glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You."

2. *As You have given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.*

Notice the doctrine of this verse. Here is the mention, both of a general and a particular relation to Christ. "You have given Him power over all flesh." Never think of setting a limit to the value of Christ's atoning sacrifice! Never dream that you can understand all its influences and all its bearings. By His death, Christ has power over all flesh. But notice, also, the special purpose and objective of redemption. Observe how it applies particularly to the elect of God. The motive for the Father's giving Christ power over all flesh is this, "that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him."

3. *And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.*

The knowledge of God and the knowledge of the Messiah, the Sent One—this is not only life, but it is life that can never die—"This is life eternal." Have you, dear friend, received this eternal life? Do you know the only true God? Do you know Jesus Christ whom He has sent? Then, at this very moment, you possess eternal life, and you shall never perish, for eternal life is a life that cannot possibly die!

4, 5. *I have glorified You on the earth: I have finished the work which You gave me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.*

This is such a prayer as never could have been prayed by a mere man, and you cannot understand this prayer at all apart from the manhood and the Deity of Christ combined. No human being could have written such a prayer as this even if it had been proposed to him to write a prayer that would be equally suitable to God and man. It is only suitable to Christ, the God-man, and it is, in itself, one of the best evidences of the inspiration of Scripture! I dare take my stand upon this chapter, alone, and say that here

we have the finger of God, the writing of the Holy Spirit—and here we have the very words of Him who was God and man in one person.

6. *I have manifested Your name to the men which You gave me out of the world: Yours they were, and You gave them to Me; and they have kept Your word.*

How gracious it was on our Lord's part to say the best He could of His disciples! These 12 men had learned but little of the divine Word, but they had believed what they had been taught, so Jesus could say of them to His Father, "Yours they were, and You gave them to Me; and they have kept Your word."

7, 8. *Now they have known that all things whatever You have given Me are of You. For I have given to them the words which You gave Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from You, and they have believed that You did send Me.*

I want you to notice how the Lord Jesus Christ makes no boast of being "an original thinker." On the contrary, He says to His Father concerning His disciples, "I have given to them the words which You gave Me." I would rather repeat the Word of God, syllable by syllable, than I would *dare* to think for myself apart from the revealed will of God! What are men's thoughts, after all, but vanity educed from vanity? But the Word of the Lord endures forever—it shall abide when even heaven and earth shall pass away! Hence our Savior lays great stress upon this fact, "I have given to them the words which You gave to Me." Brother minister, may you and I, when we come to die, be able to say to the Lord concerning our people, "I have given to them the words which You gave to me."

9. *I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which You have given Me; for they are Yours.* In this, our Lord's last great intercessory prayer, He was especially engaged in petitions for His own people. There is a sense in which He intercedes for all mankind, but in the higher and more special sense referred to in this verse, Christ's own chosen ones occupied all His thoughts—"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which You have given Me; for they are Yours."

10-11. *And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You.* Christ is God, and therefore, looking into the future, He can speak of His approaching departure as though it had already happened.

11. *Holy Father, keep through Your own name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one, as We are.*

See the plaintive power of this prayer of a tender heart. First, our Lord shows His love by praying for us, and then by dying for us. Notice what importance He attaches to the unity of His people—"that they may be one, as we are." Let us all try to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." I suppose that while we are in this world, we shall never all think alike, but let us all think alike about our Lord—and gather to His name, and feel a holy unity through His Spirit! When shall it be again said that all Christ's disciples have "one Lord, one faith, one baptism"? Alas, they tore His seamless robe, and it still remains torn through the schisms and errors which divide His people, one from another!

12, 13. *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name: those that You gave Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to You.*

These are sweet Words with which to die. Oh, that you and I might have them in our hearts, if not on our lips, in our expiring moments! "And now come I to You." Our Lord thinks nothing of the bloody way by which He was to go to the Father. What though the cross, nails and spear are in the road? He thinks comparatively little of all those terrible things, for He looks beyond them. And He says, "Now come I to You."

13. *And these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves.*

Have you ever obtained this blessing, brothers and sisters—Christ's joy in you—what is more, Christ's joy *fulfilled* in you? God grant to all of us to know, by happy experience, the meaning of this wondrous expression!

14, 15. *I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.*

"Do not let the world so besmear and defile them as to do them mischief. Let them keep on as lamps burning in dark places. Take them not out of the world, but keep them from the evil one."

16-18. *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Your truth: Your word is truth. As You have sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.*

As the Father took Jesus out of the bosom of His love, and bade Him go as His missionary to men, so does Jesus keep us, for a while, away from the bosom of His glory that we may stop here to be mis-

sionaries among our fellow men. Are we fulfilling our calling? Are we justifying the commission which Christ has laid upon us? Oh, that we were doing so to the fullest extent that is possible!

19. *And for their sakes I sanctify Myself—*

“For their sakes I set Myself apart.”—

19, 20. *That they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone—*

This little handful of followers gathered about Me—

20. *But for them, also, which shall believe on Me through their word.*

In the glass of prevision, Christ saw us, my brothers and sisters, and He saw all the myriads, yet unborn, who are to be gathered to His cross, and to bow before His feet—and He prayed for them all—“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them, also, which shall believe on Me through their word.”

21, 22. *That they all may be one; as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that You have sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are One.*

Let us, more and more, lay aside everything that divides, especially that evil heart of unbelief, and pride, and self-seeking which is the great sect-making faculty. May we get rid of that evil, and come more and more to realize that all men who are really in Christ are, and must be, one. If we are members of one body, one blood courses through our veins, and gives us life! One Spirit is in the one body of Christ. There cannot be two lives. There cannot be two beings within the one body of Christ. All true believers must be one, and truly, if we speak the truth of God to one another concerning our Lord—and especially if we speak much to God together in prayer—we straightway perceive that we *are* one!

23-26. *I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them, as You have loved Me. Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me: for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world has not known You: but I have known You, and these have known that You have sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them.*

Here the Master ended His sweet prayer, and went off to His terrible passion in Gethsemane.

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