

CHRIST'S CARE OF HIS DISCIPLES

NO. 2616

A SERMON

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AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK

ON A LORD'S-DAY EVENING, EARLY IN THE YEAR 1857

“If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way.”

John 18:8

WE need but hint at the circumstances under which these words were uttered. Our Savior was in the Garden of Gethsemane with His disciples—a multitude came with the officers commissioned by the high priest to seize Him. He went boldly towards them and asked, “Whom seek ye?” They answered, “Jesus of Nazareth.” At His words, “I am he,” “they went backward and fell to the ground,” and then Jesus said to them, “I have told you that I am he. If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way.”

Now, in a very simple manner, I shall try, first of all, *to draw a few lessons from this occurrence* and then, secondly, *to bring out a great truth which I think is foreshadowed in this utterance of our Redeemer.*

I. First, let us CONSIDER THE LESSONS OF THE OCCURRENCE ITSELF. Our Savior said to these people, “If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way.”

In this incident, our Master proved *His own willingness to die*. This word of His was a mandate so powerful that none of the disciples were seized, much less put to death. There was Peter, who had drawn his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. We should naturally have expected that he would have been arrested, or smitten to the earth, but so powerful was the command of Christ that not a finger was laid upon His hasty-tempered disciple.

Peter and John later went into the judgment hall—as it were, into the very teeth of our Lord's enemies—but with the exception of a few jeers, they were suffered to go their way. John did even more than that, for he went within the range of the spears of the Roman soldiers and stood at the foot of Christ's cross and wept. Yet not a finger was laid on him, nor on any one of Christ's disciples—not for want of will, for you remember, they seized a young man who left his garment in their hands and fled naked—evidently supposing him to have been a disciple of Christ.

This shows, then, the power of Christ's mandate that, in that hour of darkness, not so much as one of His disciples was maltreated, but all were suffered to go their way. If Christ, then, by His simple word, delivered His disciples, how much more could He have delivered Himself? And in His not doing so, you cannot fail to see how willing He was to die. One word threw them to the ground. Another word would have hurled them into the arms of death, but our Savior would not speak the word which might have saved Himself, for He came to save others, not Himself.

There is something very courageous in the Savior's saying, “If ye seek me.” You know that when Adam sinned, God had to seek the culprit, but in this case, when Christ stood as the Surety for His people, instead of being sought, He seemed to seek His executioners. “If ye seek me,” said He, and He put in an “if,” as though it were not so much their seeking Him as His seeking them—for He had come into their very midst to die.

Our blessed Lord was well-acquainted with the circumstances of His own death. He sat at the table, at the institution of the Lord's supper on that memorable evening—why could He not wait and be seized there? But no, dauntless, “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” steps out and boldly faces His enemy. He does not wait to be attacked, but goes forth to meet death, to give Himself up for us.

Scarcely any martyr has done such a deed as this. God has helped them to die when they have been delivered into the hands of their enemies, but our Savior goes to His enemies and says, "Here I am. If ye seek me, I have come to give Myself up. I will put you to no trouble in searching for Me. There is no necessity to hunt through the length and breadth of Jerusalem to find Me out. Here I am. If ye seek me, I am ready to die. Take Me, I have no opposition to make. 'If ye seek me,' all I have to say is, 'Let these go their way.' As for Myself, I am willing enough to die!"

Learn, then, Christian, the readiness of your Master to suffer for you. He was no unwilling Savior. You have sometimes borrowed money from a friend and when you have taken it from him, it was a grief to you to accept it, for he looked upon you as a beggar, or even as a robber who had demanded spoil of him.

But when you take Christ's favors, there is this sweet consideration with them, that they are all given willingly. The blood that you drink and the flesh that you eat, spiritually, is no dole of a strained benevolence, but the voluntary, munificent gift from the heart of Jesus to you and to your brethren. Rejoice, then, in the willingness of Christ to suffer for you.

In the second place, upon the very face of our text, we read *the care of Christ towards His people*. "If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way." Oh! the agony of the Savior's heart at that moment. A friend in trouble is frequently forgetful—expect not a man in great grief to remember you—the heart is then so full of its own bitterness, it has no time to think of others.

I would pardon any man for not noticing me in the street, if he were ill. I would easily forgive anyone for forgetting anything when loaded with pain and sorrow. And surely, beloved, we might have thought it not hard of Jesus if He had forgotten His disciples in His hour of grief. But mark how kind His heart is, "'If ye seek me'—I say nothing about how you should treat *Me*—but 'let these'—these disciples were the only ones He cared about. He cared not for Himself—'let *these* go their way.'"

Like the mother in the snowstorm who takes off her own clothes to wrap around her cold shivering babe. What cares she though the cold blast should find out her inmost soul and though her body be frozen like ice, if her babe but lives? Her first thought, after she is restored to consciousness, when she has been well-nigh benumbed to death, but chafed to life by kindness, is concerning that babe. It was even so with Jesus. "Let these go their way."

*"When justice, by our sins provoked,
Drew forth its dreadful sword,
He gave His soul up to the stroke
Without a murmuring word.*

*"This was compassion like a God,
That when the Savior knew
The price of pardon was His blood,
His pity ne'er withdrew.*

*"Now though He reigns exalted high,
His love is still as great;
Well He remembers Calvary,
Nor lets His saints forget."*

They are all recollected, all borne upon His heart, and still cared for. Therefore you are cared for, you lamb of the flock. You are cared for, poor Ready-to-halt. You are remembered, Miss Despondency. You are regarded with the eyes of love, timid Mr. Fearing. Though you stumble at every stone, yet your Savior's love fails not. He remembers you, for He cared for His disciples in His hour of greatest sorrow.

In the next place, learn from this incident *our Savior's wisdom*. When He said, "Let these go their way," there was wisdom in it. How? Because they were not prepared to suffer and it would have been

unwise to have allowed them to suffer then, if they had been prepared—for if they had suffered then, it would have been thought that at least they shared the honor of our redemption. Therefore Christ would have none but thieves upon the mount of doom, lest any should suppose that He had a helper. He did tread the winepress alone and of the people there were none with Him.

Besides, these disciples were but infants in grace—they had not received the plenitude of the Spirit. They were not fit to suffer. Therefore Christ said, “If ye seek me, let these go their way.” These raw recruits must not yet bear the brunt of the battle. Let them tarry until, by a longer experience, and by greater grace, they shall be made brave to die, and shall each of them in his turn wear the crown of martyrdom, but not now. Christ spared His people at that moment since it would have been unwise to have allowed them to die then.

Learn also, Christians, from your Master's example, *the duty of putting yourselves in the way of suffering when you can save your brethren*. Oh! there is something glorious in the spirit Christ manifested in placing Himself first. “If ye seek me, let these go their way.” That is the spirit all Christians ought to catch—the spirit of heroic self-sacrifice for the disciples' sake.

The mere professor says, “Let *me* go my way, seek another to be put to death.” But if we were what we should be, we should each one say, “If ye seek *me*, let *these* go their way.” How many of us would be ready to escape martyrdom and allow our brethren to be burned! But that would not be the spirit of our Master.

How frequently you are ready to allow opprobrium and shame to fall upon the church if you can but be yourself screened! How very frequently you will allow a brother to perform a duty at much inconvenience, which you could do without any trouble to yourself! Now, if you were like your Master, you would say, “‘Let these go their way.’ If there is sufficient ground for it, let me suffer. If there is a painful duty, let me do it. Let others escape, let them go free—lo, I will give myself a willing substitute for them in this matter.”

Oh! we want everywhere more of this spirit to be able to say to the poor saint, “Poverty is seeking you. I will in some degree bear the inconvenience that you may be screened. You are sick, I will watch you. You are in need, I will clothe you. You are hungry, I will feed you. I will stand in your place as far as I am able, that you may go your way.”

These seem to me to be the lessons to be learned from our Savior's words, “If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way.”

II. Now I come to notice, secondly, THE GREAT DOCTRINE WHICH THIS INCIDENT SEEMS TO FORESHADOW.

Will you please to observe the next verse to the text? “That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.” If I had quoted this passage in such a connection, you would have told me it was a misquotation. You would have said, “Why, my dear sir, that has nothing to do with the disciples going their way or not!”

Ah! but you would be quite in error if you talked like that. God's Spirit knows how to quote, if we do not. Very often, we refer our hearers to a text which we think is exactly adapted and pertinent to the point before us, when it has really nothing to do with the matter, and often the Holy Spirit quotes a text which we think unsuitable.

But on closer examination, we find that the very gist of it bears directly upon the subject. This was the beginning of Christ's deliverances, which He would through eternity vouchsafe to all His children. Inasmuch as He then said, “Let these go their way,” *it was the foreshadowing, the picturing, of the great deed of substitution* whereby Christ would be able to say, “If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way.” This point will appear dearly if we look at how Christ treats His people in Providence and at the bar of Justice.

It has always seemed to me as if *Christ had borne the brunt of providence for His people*, so that now all things work together for their good. When Christ came into the world, He did, in spirit, say something like this, “You wild beasts of the field, you are against My people—come, now, be against

Me, and then, let these go their way.” This was according to the ancient prophecy, “I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground.”

Christ seemed to say, “Stones, you are enemies to My flock—now take Me for their Substitute and be at enmity against Me. And then it shall be written, ‘The stones of the field shall be in league with them.’” Christ, as it were, said to Providence, “Your black and bitter face shall look on Me. Your quiver, full of fiery darts, shall be emptied, and they shall all find their target here in My bosom. Your dread aspect shall be seen by Me, but ‘Let these go their way.’”

Providence has indicted its evils on Christ and has now only good for God's people. “What! Sir, only good?” you say, “why, I am poor, I am sick!” Yes, but it is only good, for that is good which works good. “All things work together for good to them that love God.” Christ says even to kings, “Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.” “Let these go their way.”

The kings of the earth have been seeking Christ's church to destroy and to devour it, so Christ lets them find Him and put Him to death. And before He dies, He turns round to the kings and says, “Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.”

He speaks to trouble, to trial, to grief, to accident, and to peril as He says, “You have sought Me, now let My people go their way.” We should never have known the sweetness of the Psalm,—

*“He that hath made his refuge God,
Shall find a most secure abode,”—*

if Christ had not died. The only way that you and I can have a refuge is by Christ bearing the brunt of our trouble.

How does a shield save me? It saves me by bearing the blows itself. The shield does, as it were, say to the swords of the enemy, “If ye seek me, let this warrior go his way.” So Christ, our Shield and God's Anointed, bears the brunt of Providence, the evil and the woe thereof, and He says now to the mysterious dispensations of God, concerning all the children of the Lord, “‘Let these go their way.’ Never, never work ill to them, but let them have only good.”

The other thought is, *Christ has said this of His people even to Justice*. Before the throne of God, fiery Justice once drew his sword and went out after sinners, to find full many and to cast them into the pit. His sword thirsted for the blood of all that had sinned, but there stood a chosen multitude, reserved by love and chosen by grace.

And Justice said, “They are sinners. I will have them, I will sheathe this sword in their hearts, for they are sinners and they must perish.” Then Christ came forward and asked him, “Whom seekest thou?” “Sinners,” answered Justice. Then said Jesus, “They are not sinners. They were sinners once, but they are righteous now, clothed in My righteousness. If ye seek the sinner, here am I.”

“What!” said Justice, “are You the sinner?” “No, not the sinner, but I am the sinner's Substitute. All the sinner's guilt was imputed to Me. All his unrighteousness is Mine and all My righteousness is his. I, the Savior, am the sinner's Substitute. Take Me.” And Justice accepted the substitution, took the Savior, crucified Him, nailed Him to that cross, whose agonies we commemorate at the communion table.

In that hour Jesus cried, “If ye seek me, let these go their way.” Who are they that are to go their way? Why, the very men whose former way was one of iniquity and whose end would have been destruction, if the curse had not been made to fall upon the head of Jesus!

“Let these go their way.” Oh, that a wonderful sentence! I never knew its sweetness till I found the Lord, but I did know something of its power. Do you ask, “How was that?” Why, long before you know the Lord, you have some of the power of the blood of Christ resting upon you. “How so?” do you inquire. Why, do you not know it to be a fact that,—

“Determined to save, He watched o'er our path,

When, Satan's blind slaves, we sported with death"?

And so, some of the benefits of Christ's death were ours before we knew Him and before we loved Him. The reason why I was not damned before I knew the Savior was that He had said, "Let him go his way. I have died for him." You would have been in hell these twenty years, saint, for you were then unregenerate. But Christ said, "Let him go his way. If ye seek Me, he shall go his way, sinner though he be."

And now, when gloomy fears arise and dark thoughts roll over our mind, let this be our comfort. Sinners we are still, guilty and vile, but the same voice says, "Let these go their way." It is the "let" of command and who can hinder when God lets in this sense? "Let these go their way."

You are going up Bunyan's Hill Difficulty and there are lions at the top. Christians, remember this message, "Let these go their way." You will, perhaps, get into Giant Despair's dungeon. Here is a key that will fit the lock, "Let these go their way." You will be tumbling about in the Slough of Despond—here is a stone to put your foot on to help you to get out, "Let these go their way." What for? Because they pray? No. Because they serve God? No—the mandate was given before they did either the one or the other. "Let these go their way," because Christ died in their stead.

The day is coming, and shall soon be here, when you and I shall stretch our wings and fly away to the land that is very far off. I think I might picture in my imagination the soul when it has left the body. The believer speeds his way up to his native city, Jerusalem, "the mother of us all." But at the gate one stands and he says, "Have you a right to admission here? It is written, 'He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high.' Are you such a one?"

"Ah!" says the soul, "I hope by grace I have been made so, but I cannot claim to have always been so, for 'I the chief of sinners am.'" "Then how came you here? This gate gives no admission to those who are sinners." While the angel is thus parleying, I hear a voice crying, "Let these go their way" and forthwith, the gates of heaven are opened and every soul for whom Christ died does enter into Paradise.

Come, saint, close up this simple meditation by looking yonder. See Christ, with justice, vengeance, wrath, all seeking Him. Lo, they have found Him. They have slain Him. He is buried. He has risen again. Oh! see them seeking Him and as you sit down at His table, think, "When they sought Him, they let me go my way."

And what a sweet way it is! I am allowed to come to His table of communion. Why? Because they sought *Him*. I am invited to hold fellowship with Jesus. Why? Because they sought *Him*. I am permitted to have a good hope through grace, and more than that, "I know that when this earthly house of my tabernacle is dissolved, I have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Why am I to go that way? Why? Because they sought *Him* and found *Him*. Else, where had I been now? My place might have been on the alehouse bench or perhaps in the seat of the scorner. And what would have been my prospect? Why, that, at the last, I would be in hell among the fiends and the lost spirits of the pit, but now I tread the paths of righteousness and the ways of grace.

Oh, let me remember why I do so—it is because they sought You, O precious Lord of mine! They sought You, my dear Redeemer and my God. They sought Your heart and broke it. They sought Your head and crowned it with thorns. They sought Your hands and nailed them to the tree. They sought Your feet and pierced them. They sought Your body, they slew and buried it. And now, though the roaring lion may seek me never so much, he cannot devour me. Never can I be rent in pieces, never can I be destroyed, for I carry with me this sweet passport of the King of heaven, "Let these go their way."

O child of God, take this with you for your safe conduct everywhere! When men travel abroad, they carry with them a permit to go to this town and the other. Take this little sentence, brother or sister in Jesus, and when unbelief stops you, draw it out and say, "He has said, 'Let these go their way.'" And when Satan stops you, hold out to him this divine mandate, "Let these go their way."

And when death shall stop you, take out this sweet permit from your Master, "Let these go their way." And when the throne of judgment shall be set and you stand before it, plead this sentence, plead it even before Your Maker, "My Master said, 'Let these go their way.'"

Oh, cheering words! I could weep them all out, but I will say no more. I hope many of you will enjoy the sweetness of them while we gather around the Lord's table, in obedience to His gracious command, "This do in remembrance of me."

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

JOHN 17 AND 18:1-9

John 17:1. *These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:*

Jesus is going forth to die and He knows it, yet He prays to His Father, "Glorify thy Son." There was no way of His coming to that glory except by passing through tears, and blood, and agony, and death. He only asks that He may be glorified in what He is about to do and suffer, and He is ready for it all—"Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee."

2. *As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

In that saying of our Lord, we have an explanation of what He did by His redemption. There was a universal aspect of it, "Thou hast given him power over all flesh." There was a special design in it, "That he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."

Sometimes, two views of the same thing may appear to contradict each other, but when we are taught of God, we soon discover that they do not really do so, and that a grand truth may be contained in the two descriptions of it. Christ had, by virtue of His death, power over all flesh, but it was for a distinct purpose—"that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."

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

By this, then, dear friends, we can know whether we have eternal life or not. Do we know the Father? Do we know Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the Sent One? Are we resting in that blessed knowledge? If so, He has given us eternal life.

4-5. *I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

In deep humility, Jesus had laid that glory aside for a while. He had tabernacled in human flesh and when He spoke these words, the time was approaching when,—

"All His work and warfare done,"

He should go back to His pristine glory with something more added to it.

6. *I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world:*

They had not all of them clearly seen that manifestation. Jesus had to ask the question, "Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" Still, that was not the fault of the manifestation. Christ had manifested the name—that is, the character—of God unto those who had been given to Him out of the world.

6. *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.*

We might have expected that the verse would end, "and I have kept them." But their keeping God's Word is the evidence that Christ has kept them. Whenever a soul loves the Word of God, delights in the teaching of Christ, glories in those things which the world calls dogmas—as if they were so much dog's

meat—when you and I can feed upon these things—when every utterance of Christ is dear and precious to us—that is good evidence of our being called out of the world and separated unto Christ. It is one of the marks of divine grace which Jesus works in those whom the Father has given Him. “Thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.”

7. *Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.*

The Father gives Christ the truth which Christ gives to us. The Father gives Christ the souls which Jesus keeps until the day of His power. There is mutual communion between God the Father and His blessed Son. Let us never say a word that might look as if we did not understand the oneness—the everlasting and infinite oneness—which there is between the sacred persons of the Divine Unity.

8. *For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me;*

You know how men talk against “verbal inspiration.” Yet Christ says, “I have given unto them *the words* which thou gavest me.” Many are trifling with the teaching of God’s Word as if it were of no importance at all. Not so did Christ. “I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me.”

8. *And they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.*

Firmly do we believe this and in our heart of hearts we accept every part of the teaching of Christ, no matter what it is. I hear people say, sometimes, “Oh, but that is not essential!” There is a great deal of mischief hatched out of that egg. O friends, it is essential that Christ’s disciples should treasure whatever He has said! Never trifle with that part of the Word of God which seems to be less essential to salvation than another portion, for if it is not essential to salvation, it may be essential to your comfort, or your holiness, or your strength, or your usefulness.

And if it be essential to God’s glory, let us never trample it in the mire or in any way dishonor it. Who am I that I should say, “This which God has spoken is important, but that other is not”? It does not do for us to presume to judge the Word of God—we should rather let the Word of God judge us.

9. *I pray for them:*

Blessed word! Christ prays for His own people. “I pray for them:”

9. *I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me;*

In that last hour, just before His Passion, His thoughts were separating the precious from the vile and His prayer ascended for His own people. “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me.”

9-10. *For they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.*

It is a wonderful thing that Christ should be glorified in His people. Can it be that He shall be glorified in me? Dear child of God, you sometimes sit in the corner and think to yourself, “How insignificant I am! The church on earth would not miss me if I were taken away and the choirs of heaven cannot need me.”

Oh, but your Lord is glorified in you! If you are one of His chosen and redeemed people, in your very weakness and need He finds opportunity to glorify His strength and His fullness. He knows the truth about this matter and He says, “I am glorified in them.”

11. *And now I am no more in the world,*

He was going away. He has gone now.

11. *But these are in the world,*

We know we are, do we not, brethren? We have a thousand things—some of them very painful and humiliating to us—to remind us that we are still in the world.

11. *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.*

Oh, what blessed keeping is that—to be kept in spiritual oneness! I do not expect to see the people of God in visible oneness, but as there was a secret, invisible union, most real and most true, between the Father and the Son, so there is, at this time, a secret union in the hearts of all believers, most deep, most real, most true.

I may never have seen that good friend before, but as soon as we begin to talk of Jesus and His love, if we are the living children of the living God, the bond of unity is felt at once by both of us. "One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren."

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.*

What a blessed Shepherd is this who never lost a sheep! Judas crept in among the flock, but he never was truly one of the flock. He was never a son of God. He was "the son of perdition" all along. Christ has kept all His sheep and all His lambs, and He will do the same, dear friends, even to the end.

13. *And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.*

What an unselfish Savior! His heart is ready to break with His impending sufferings and yet He prays for us, that we may be filled with His joy. I suppose that it is true that the Man of sorrows was the happiest man who ever lived. "For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame," and notwithstanding His boundless and bottomless grief, yet there was within Him such communion with God, and love to men, and the certainty of His ultimate triumph, that kept Him still joyous above the seas of tribulation. He prays that that same joy may be fulfilled in us. May God graciously grant it to all of us who believe in Jesus!

14-15. *I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*

There is a reason for God's elect being allowed to remain in the world. They are never left, like wheat in the field, to perish through the damp and cold, or to be devoured by the birds of the air. Oh, no! We are left for God's glory, that men may see what the grace of God can do in poor frail bodies. For the service of Christ's church, that we may be here for a while to carry on the cause of God, to be the means of comforting the little ones, and to seek the conversion of sinners. We are to be like salt to prevent putrefaction. We are God's preventive men, to prevent as much of the evil as we can, and we are to fight with the evil that cannot be prevented, and to seek to overthrow it in Christ's name.

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

Many, nowadays, say that we ought to blend the church with the congregation and that it is a great pity to have any division between them. A great many good people are outside the church—therefore try to make the church as much like the world as ever you can! That is a silly trick of the devil which the wise servants of God will answer by saying, "To whom we give place for subjection, no, not for an hour."

There must ever be a broad line of demarcation between the church of Christ and the world, and it will be an evil day when that line is abolished. The sons of God took to themselves wives of the daughters of men, but that kind of union brought mischief with it and it will ever do so.

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

We cannot afford to give up God's inspired Word, because it is a means of our sanctification, and if this be taken away, it is not such and such a dogma, as they call it, put into the background, but it is truth that would sanctify us which is discarded, it is God's own Word that is flung to the dogs, and that must never be.

18-19. *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.*

"I set Myself apart unto holiness that they also might be set apart unto holy uses through the truth."

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

Our Lord knew that the little circle around Him would grow into a multitude that no man can number, out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues—so He prayed for all whom His Father had given Him,—

21-22. *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. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:*

The church will never know her true glory till she knows her perfect oneness—the One church will be the glorious church.

23. *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

That is a grand expression, “Thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” What! With the same love? It is even so—a love without beginning, a love without change, a love without bounds, a love without end. “Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me.”

24-26. *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.*

This blessed prayer was heard by the Father. All of it must be fulfilled and untold blessings do and shall come to us through this intercession of our Lord. Blessed be His holy name!

John 18:1. *When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.*

Our Lord could not cross that “brook Cedron” without being reminded of the time when David went that way in the hour of his sorrow, though He knew that He had to face a far greater trial than that of David. The very brook would remind Him of His approaching sacrifice, for through it flowed the blood and refuse from the temple.

2. *And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted there with his disciples.*

The place of our Lord’s frequent retirement for private prayer was well-known to Judas, who had often gone there with his Lord and his fellow disciples.

3. *Judas, then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.*

How completely the traitor must have been in the power of Satan, and how hardened and callous he must have grown, that he could lead “thither” the men who were going to arrest the Savior! Truly it was by wicked hands that Christ was taken, and crucified, and slain. Yet, unconsciously, these evil men were carrying out “the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.”

How strangely were they equipped for their deed of darkness! “With lanterns and torches and weapons.” They were coming to the Light of the world bearing “lanterns and torches.” And armed with “weapons” that they might use against “the Lamb of God”! If He had wished to deliver Himself, all their “weapons” would have been in vain, and their “lanterns and torches” would not have revealed Him, even with the help of the full moon, which was probably shining at the time.

4-5. *Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.*

Notice, dear friends, that the word “he” is in italics, showing that it is not in the original. Our Lord here twice used the name of JEHOVAH—I AM—as He did on certain other memorable occasions. It was most fitting that, as He was going out to die, He should declare that it was no mere man who was about to suffer on the cross, but that, while He was truly man, He was also “very God of very God.”

6. *As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they drew backward, and fell to the ground.*

The simple utterance of His name drove them from Him and smote them to the earth. What would have happened if He had put forth His almighty power?

7-9. *Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.*

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