CHRIST'S NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE PRAYER
NO. 2355

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S DAY, APRIL 8, 1894.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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"I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from evil."
John 17:15.

NOTICE, in the prayer of our Divine Lord, what honor He always puts upon God the Father. He ascribes to God everything—the taking the disciples out of the world, or the keeping them from the evil in the world. Let us never neglect to look for God's hand in all that happens to the saints and let us not fall into the error of those who deny the Great First Cause and are always dealing with appearances, forgetting the Mighty God who shapes our ends and rules our destinies. If we die, it is not by chance, but because God takes us out of the world. Believers fall asleep in Jesus, neither before nor after the predestined time. No disease or accident can cut short their lives and it would not be possible to prolong their existence beyond the time appointed by the Lord. I like to believe—whatever it may be to some of you, to me it is very sweet to believe that—

"All must come, and last, and end,
As shall please my heavenly Friend.
Plagues and deaths around me fly,
Till He bids, I cannot die!
Not a single shaft can hit
Till the God of Love thinks fit."

Our lives are entirely in the keeping of our loving Father. You can see that Truth of God in the text. Jesus speaks of God as taking the beloved ones out of the world and it is even so. This fact should make us cease to be anxious about when or how we shall die and it should, at the same time, reconcile us to the time and the manner of the going Home of any whom we love most dearly. They were not snatched away by the robber, Death—they were taken out of the world by our dear Father's gracious hand! Let us say concerning them what Job said of his loved ones, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

See, also, how our Lord Jesus honors the Father by ascribing to Him the keeping of the saints from evil, for He says, "I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from evil." Beloved, our escape from evil, at the first, was by the Father's Grace. Our persevering in righteousness until now has been worked in us by the Father's hand, through the Divine Spirit and, this day, if we have not apostatized—if we have not denied the faith and proved traitors to Christ—we must ascribe it entirely to the Grace of God! As the Psalmist says, "It is He that has made us, and not we, ourselves," and it is He who keeps us, and not we, ourselves, for, again quoting the 100th Psalm, "We are His people, and the sheep of His pasture."

I want you, as far as you possibly can, to be constantly recognizing God's overruling hand—God, in our death, taking us out of the world, and God, in our life, keeping us from evil, and upholding us in our integrity. When you get thus near to God and realize that God is always present with you, you are in the right frame of mind for prayer. You are also in the state and condition of heart which will give you courage in time of danger—you are, indeed, ready for anything and for everything, whatever may come to you, when God is thus consciously overshadowing your spirit. This much, I think, the prayer of our Lord plainly suggests.

Observe, again, that God has us absolutely at His disposal. Let us always remember that great Truth. The prayer of Jesus recognizes His Father's Sovereignty, but, we, ourselves, must also recognize that we are entirely in God's hands. He can take us out of the world, or He can keep us in the world and preserve us from evil. We are glad to be at the disposal of

our God! As His people, we would have no voice or choice in fixing our own position, but with the Psalmist we would say, "He shall choose our inheritance for us." Whether we stay, or whether we go, depends entirely upon the Lord's will and Christ, in His prayer, recognizes that it is so. He would not pray for a matter which was not in the hands of Him to whom He prayed. He felt that His people were absolutely at His Father's disposal and, therefore, He presented the prayer which is to be the subject of our meditation tonight.

Now, in this petition, there are two things. There is, first, *the negative prayer*— "I pray not that You should take them out of the world." And then, secondly, there is *the positive prayer*— "But that You should keep them from evil."

I. There is here, first, THE NEGATIVE PRAYER—"I pray not that you should take them out of the world."

At first sight, that seems almost unkind on our Savior's part. What could happen better than for those whom the world hated to be taken out of the world? Jesus, Himself, was going out of the world—what could He do that should have greater love in it than to pray that they might go with Him? I have often felt as Thomas did when he said, "Let us, also, go, that we may die with Him." Has Jesus gone? Why should we tarry here? Has Jesus entered Glory? Let us be with Him where He is, that we may behold His Glory. There is nothing left to detain us below since He has ascended to His Father's right hand—but there is *everything* to attract us upward since He is there who is our heart's Lord, our All in All! Have you not often felt inclined to pray for yourself that the Lord would take you out of the world? I mean, not merely in times of depression, when, like Elijah, *who never died*, you are ready to pray, "Now, O Lord, take away my life," but in times of exultation, when you have been near to the gates of Heaven in ecstatic joy and holy gladness—have you not wished to slip in? "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if You will, let us make here three tabernacles." Have you not said so in your heart, if not with your voice? No, have you not wished, not to stay on the Mount of Transfiguration, but from that point to take your heavenward flight and land yourself in the New Jerusalem, to go no more out forever? I know that, sometimes, on a Sabbath, when we have been singing, to the tune Prospect—

"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,
And cast a wishful eye
To Canaan's fair and happy land,
Where my possessions lie,"

I have felt that I could, from my heart, sing the last verse of the hymn—

"Filled with delight, my raptured soul
Can here no longer stay.
Though Jordan's waves around me roll,
Fearless I'd launch away."

Yet the Savior says, "I pray not that You should take them out of the world." I am sure, therefore, that it is a better thing for us to stay here till our appointed time than it is for us to be taken out of the world. It may not be better in all respects, but there are some points in which it is an advantage for Believers to remain here. Our Savior loves us so much that He would be certain to ask the very best thing for us. Therefore, for us to be taken out of the world at once, would not be, all things considered, the best disposition of us that the Lord could make.

How is that? Well, first, if we, who are Christ's people, were taken out of the world, then *the world, itself, could perish*. Do we contemplate, with any pleasure, such a catastrophe as that? "You are the light of the world." Take all the lights away and the murky atmosphere, which is dark enough, even now, would become dense as Egyptian midnight—and life would be intolerable. "You are the salt of the earth." Should the salt be taken away, putrefaction would revel without limit—corruption would then have nothing to contend with it and the world would reek in the nostrils of God, Himself, till He would be obliged to destroy it!

I look along the ages and I see mankind given up to debauchery and eaten up with worldliness, yet the sinners are permitted to live on year after year. But I also see a strange-looking ship that has been built on dry land and I watch the only family on the earth that fears God, going up into that strange-shaped vessel, and the door is shut by God, Himself! I hear it as it closes and the moment that door is shut, what happens? The world is doomed! God pulls up the sluices of the great deep that lies under and He throws open the floodgates of Heaven—the fountains gush up from below and the rains pour down from above till the whole world is drowned! This awful judgment did not begin till Noah, the one righteous man, was taken away from the rest of mankind and shut in the ark—"*The same day* were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of Heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty

nights. *In the same day* entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of His sons with them, into the ark."

I look again, and away yonder, I behold, in the vale of Siddim, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. If I go within their gates, I hear and see that which disgusts my soul. Things that it were a shame even to speak of, are done in those cities! There is one good man who lives there, and only one. And I see him, early one morning, fleeing with his wife and daughters out of the city. The moment he has passed beyond the bounds of the condemned cities and escaped to little Zoar, what happens? Destruction is poured out of Heaven upon the guilty people—"The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. *Then* the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of Heaven and He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities and that which grew upon the ground."

Because we do not wish such awful destruction as that, either by water or by fire, to fall upon this guilty world, we ask God to permit the salt to remain in the earth, the light to still burn in it, the Noah to still linger, the Lot to still dwell here yet a little while. When the Lord shall begin rapidly to gather His saints Home, as He may do, by-and-by, and when the wail is heard, "The faithful fail from among the children of men," then shall come dark days, indeed, and the earth shall know the terrible vengeance of Almighty God!

This, then, is one reason why Christ does not pray that we should be taken out of the world—because it would be the ruin of guilty men if the saints were removed from the earth which is only preserved for their sake.

Does not the Lord also wish the righteous to stay in the world a while that *they may be the means of the salvation of others?* How came Jesus here, Himself? He came to seek and to save that which was lost and when He went away, He did not take His disciples out of the world because their ministry was to be blessed to many of their fellow creatures. In this very prayer to His Father, He said, "As You have sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." They who might be safely housed in Heaven stay here that they may be the means of saving others. Mother is still here, though her son has well-near broken her heart. She is left on the earth that she may yet win that boy for Christ. And our old gray-headed friend, whose infirmities are multiplying, is still among us though he would be far happier among the harps of angels—but he is detained here that his grandson, or his still unconverted daughter may hear from his lips, once more, a loving, living testimony for the Lord Jesus and may, thereby be turned to God.

I think that there are many of you who do not, yourselves, love the Lord, who, nevertheless, ought to be very grateful to Him for saying, "I pray not that You should take them out of the world." Oh, dear man, you do not want to lose that loving wife of yours! She has brought you here, tonight, after a good deal of coaxing and tender persuasion. You do not think of her God, or care about the Lord Jesus, but your wife is still living to seek the salvation of your soul! I believe she will win you, yet, by God's Grace! There are many who might, long ago, have received their reward and would have been thrice happy to do so, but they have yet to preach the everlasting Gospel and yet to win more souls to Christ! It is more necessary for sinners that Paul should abide in the flesh a little longer, though he, himself, has a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better!

Beloved Christian Brothers and Sisters, if the Lord is keeping any of us here with the objective of using us in the salvation of others, let us take care that we answer the purpose of our continued existence on the earth—let us be up and doing! Let us be earnestly seeking the souls of our relatives! Let us be zealously endeavoring to bring others to Christ! I am sometimes saddened when I hear of households conducted by professedly Christian people—places where one would think that God's name would be upon every tongue—and yet servants may live for years in such families and their masters and mistresses never speak to them about their souls! And many men, employing hundreds of people, will give them their wages as if they had no souls to care about, for they take no interest in the eternal welfare of those who work for them in temporal things! Do not let it be so with you, dear Friends! Masters and mistresses, there are occasions in which you can go to your servants and those employed by you and, without being at all intrusive, can seek to interest them in the things of God! You can call at their homes, perhaps, and the offering of a prayer and speaking to them about the Gospel of Christ may reach them, and bring them to the Savior, where our sermons have failed to do so. I charge you, by Him who bought you by His blood, either go to Heaven and glorify Christ, there, or else, if you remain in the world, glorify Him here! But whether you live, or whether you die, see to this matter, that you answer the Divine purpose, which is that being saved, yourself, you may become the means of saving others.

There is a second reason, then, for our Lord wishing His disciples to stay here, that they may be the means of the salvation of others.

Next, I think the Lord lets His people stay in the world *that they may serve Him in the place where they sinned against Him*. If I had been converted just now, and the Lord were to open the gates of Heaven and say, "Come in," I think that I would step back and say, "Dear Master, may I stay here just a little while to undo some of the mischief that I did in my ungodly state?" I can fancy that someone here would pray, "Lord, there is my friend who used to go to the theater and the music-hall with me, and I taught him much that was mischievous. Will it please You to let me tarry here and tell him about Your great salvation?" I think that another would say, "Lord, I spent so many years in the service of Satan. Now, before I go Home to see Your face, let me have a few years in *Your* service! I would like to undo, by Your Grace, at least a portion of the evil that I have done before I stand in Your Presence amid the eternal splendors of Heaven." It seems to me that it is most gracious of the Lord to let us remain here to serve Him where we sinned against Him, and not to take us Home as soon as we are converted. I think that we shall congratulate ourselves, even in Heaven, that we had some opportunity of contending for the faith, or of bearing reproach for Christ's sake, or of seeking to win souls for Him before we entered upon our everlasting rest.

Is not that a good reason why the Savior did not pray that His disciples might be taken out of the world?

And is not this another good reason why saints are left in the world? *The Lord keeps His people here that He may exhibit in them the power of Divine Grace*. Just as He permitted Job to be tempted by the devil, that all the world might see how God can enable a man, by patience, to triumph, so He keeps us here to let the devil and all men know what His Grace can do for His people and, also, to let angels and principalities and powers in the heavenly places behold what saints God can make out of guilty sinners! He takes those who had gone far away in sin and brings them near by the blood of Jesus! He fashions the rough, knotty timber that did not seem as if it could ever be shaped, and uses it in the building of His Temple. He makes wonders of Grace out of sinful men and women—such marvels of mercy that the angels will stand and gaze at them throughout eternity, as they say, "How could God make such perfect beings as these out of such sinful material?"

All this will be "to the praise of the Glory of His Grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved." You see, we cannot exhibit patience in Heaven. So far as we now know anything about Heaven, it does not seem possible that there will be any need of patience there. We cannot manifest strength of faith in Heaven, for faith will be lost in *sight*. We can take our love into Glory—there are some flowers that will sweetly open in the land where they have no need of the sun, for Christ is better than the sun! There are certain flowers of less sweet perfume and those can only be developed in the earth and the Lord, therefore, bids us tarry here a while, that He may show what Grace can do in sustaining us in suffering, upholding us under trials and protecting us against temptation. O soldiers of the Cross, do You want crowns without having contended for them?—

"Must You be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize
And sailed through bloody seas?"

Ask no such thing! Be satisfied to take your share in the conflict, or else I do not see how you can so sweetly relish the triumph which God will give to His people in due time.

Thus, the Lord exhibits the power of His Grace in us and that is another reason why we have to tarry here a while.

Next, I shall have to say many things very briefly where I could have wished to have had time for enlargement. Do you not think that we are kept here *to prepare us for Heaven?* Are we not as yet like children who need education for that truer, higher life? When a boy first goes to school, you do not put into his hands the higher classics. He must plod through his grammar. He must learn many elementary lessons and then he must work hard on dry and dreary roots. And afterwards you will give him some classic poet that he may read intelligently. So must you and I, here below, go plodding throughout primers. We must work hard at our grammars. We must still have a slate and pencil and when we have become proficient in all, we have to learn, here, so that we shall the better enjoy the holy rest and perfect service which make up the Heaven of the blessed.

Let me give you an illustration of what I mean. A boy is sent to school and his parents pinch themselves to pay for him to have a good education. It is not every boy who will say this to himself, but if he does, he is a first-rate lad—"My

poor father and mother are doing all they can to give me a first-class education here. They want to make something of me and I am going to learn with all my heart, so that I may be worthy of all that my parents design for me, and not waste one single shilling of the money they are spending upon me." Such a boy is diligent at his books. He labors where others loiter and treasures up in his mind everything that he learns while others forget it. Now the Lord Jesus Christ is thus putting some of us to school, training us for high employment hereafter! He means to make something of us, by-and-by, and our desire, now, is to be prepared, as far as possible, for what Christ intends for us, that we may be the more to His praise and glory—and our own completeness forever and ever.

I have often been puzzled by those words of the Lord Jesus, "I go to prepare a place for you." What there was about Heaven that was not ready, I do not know, except it was that Jesus, Himself, was not there. But I can easily understand this truth, that *we are not ready for Heaven* yet, for Heaven consists more in character than in place. We have to be more completely sanctified, more truly developed in all good things than we are at present. We are not yet fit for Glory, so Jesus does not pray that we should be taken out of the world, but we are to wait, here, a little longer till His Grace has more fully fitted us for Glory.

Does not the Lord, also, by keeping us here, mean us *to see more of the wisdom, the power, the Grace, and the Truth of God?* Within this last month—a month of remarkable pain and travail for me—I have had certain experiences which I shall never forget! But I would pass through seas ten times as deep and boisterous, merely for the sake of having those experiences repeated! There are some of them which I could not tell, here. There are facts connected with them that would be discreditable to some who had to do with them, though greatly honorable to other. But as to my God, they have shown me His faithfulness, His power, His tenderness, His wisdom—and I believe that, had I been in Heaven, I would not have seen as much of some of the attributes of God as I have seen here below! If you had been an angel, forever praising God in Glory, could you tell how faithful He is to a tried saint? Could you say, if you had not experienced it here on earth, how surely He comforts His people in their deepest sorrows? There are some pearls in these troubled waters that the sea of glass, itself, can never contain! There are some bright eternal lessons that we would never have known if it had not been for our earthly trials, even if we might have had an archangel for a schoolmaster! Therefore we must stay here, a while, and suffer affliction, temptation, depression of spirit, slander and abuse that we may learn, thereby, the deeper Truths of God's Revelation.

I shall have to abandon the second part of my subject, I see, for my time has already nearly gone. I must, however, make just one more remark upon our first head.

I think that our Lord Jesus does not pray that we may be called out of the world because *He knows that we shall be taken to Heaven in due time*. He scarcely thinks of that as a matter of prayer—it is so entirely in the Father's hands that He leaves it there. I would not encourage anybody here to pray that he might die and, on the other hand, I do not know that I would incite anybody here to pray very earnestly that he might *live*. Hezekiah prayed that his life might be lengthened and his prayer was granted. Manasseh would not have been born if Hezekiah had not lived those extra 15 years, but it would have been a good thing if Manasseh had never been born! Those sins and iniquities with which he made Judah to sin with his idols, though they were forgiven, yet filled up the cup of the nation's perversion from God and fixed the doom of that apostate people! I do not know if the lifting of our finger could make us live for another 20 years, whether we had not better hesitate to lift that finger! At any rate, I feel quite clear about the other side of the question—we have no business to pray that we may die.

As I have already reminded you, the man who prayed that he might die, never died at all! How foolish he was to pray that he might die, when God had intended that he should go to Heaven by a whirlwind, with a chariot and horses of fire! We shall all die in good time, unless the Lord shall come in the splendor of His Second Advent. If You and I had the choice of the time of our death, there would be just a tinge of the element of suicide about it and that is the very worst form of murder. This is clearly our duty, to leave ourselves wholly and unreservedly in the hands of Him to whom belong the issues of life—it is certainly our best course.

This, then, is our Lord's negative prayer—"I pray not that You should take them out of the world."

II. Secondly, if time had permitted, I was also to have spoken to you about THE POSITIVE PRAYER. I will only hint at this.

What did Jesus pray for His disciples? That God would keep them from evil. This is the right prayer for you to offer for yourself. Do not pray to get out of the battle—ask God that you may never be a coward, but that you may bravely play the man in the day of danger. Do not seek to be screened from affliction, but plead that you may never be driven to sin *by* your affliction. You need not even pray that you may not have prosperity, but you may entreat the Lord that prosperity may not make you proud, or worldly. Let your condition be as God wills it, but let your great anxiety be that you may be kept from all sin in every condition.

"I pray not that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from evil." We need to be kept from the evil of *apostasy*, the evil of *worldliness*, from the evil of *unholiness*, from the evil of getting to be as men of the world are—that is the main point. I do not think that it matters much what the condition of a man is so long as his heart is above his condition. I remember that St. Bernard, as he is usually called—Bernard, of Clairvaux—one of the holiest and humblest of men, was, one day, riding on a mule to a certain monastery. One who saw him said, "I think Bernard is getting proud because he is riding on a mule, and sitting upon a cloth which has a fringe of gold lace on it." Now Bernard was a man who cared nothing for that sort of thing and when the other charged him with pride, he said, "Perhaps it may be so, but I never noticed that I had any cloth at all." Someone else had put that fine cloth upon the mule without his knowing anything about it. He really thought that he was riding on the animal's bare back, for his mind was taken up with something far more important.

If you are rich and you have a cloth with a gold fringe on it, do not be conscious of its existence—let your soul rise above it! If you are poor and you have no saddle at all, do not notice your lack, but let your soul soar above such matters. Pray not that you may be taken out of this or that, be it poverty or be it wealth, be it sickness or be it health—but pray that you may be kept from the evil of it, for there *is* an evil in every case! If you are making money, we ought to have a special Prayer Meeting for you, to pray that you may be kept from evil. I said to a Brother who was going to a banquet, the other day, "Well, we will pray for you, dear Friend, for you are going into a place of peril." I do not think there was any great risk to such a man in going—perhaps some of those who stayed at home and complained of him were in more danger! The great point is not where you *are*, not what you are as to circumstances, but that you may be kept by almighty power from the evil which might come out of any circumstances unless you were Divinely preserved from evil! Oh, that the Lord Jesus may say this concerning us, tonight—"I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from evil"! If so, we can leave everything else in His dear hands.

But, Brothers and Sisters, do not let us be anxious to get to Heaven just yet. Let us seek to fight our way there in valiant fashion. Do not let us be so earnest about the end as about the way—laying hold on Christ and lifting up His dear Cross as our banner! Oh, that all of you would do this and follow the Lamb wherever He goes! We will just bend our thoughts to this one point and not think so much of going to Heaven as of avoiding sin! Lord, keep me out of evil! Then let me live or let me die, hold me up or press me down, let me dance with joy of heart, or let me lie and pine in an agony of pain with anguish racking every bone in my body, it shall be all the same to me—so long as nothing of the evil of surrounding circumstances enters into me—do with me as you will, O my God!

God bless you, dear Friends, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
JOHN 17.

Verse 1. *These words spoke Jesus, lifted up His eyes to Heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come.* The hour to which He had so long looked forward to. The hour which He had anticipated with ardent desire—"The hour is come." On the very night that Jesus prayed this prayer, Luke's record tells us, "When the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve Apostles with Him. And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." So He began His great intercessory prayer, "Father, the hour is come"—

1, 2. *Glorify Your Son that Your Son also may glorify You: as You have given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.* In these words we have both the general and the special aspects of redemption. Christ has received power over all flesh, but with this peculiar design, that He should give eternal life to

as many as His Father has given Him. Who are they who have been given to Him by His Father? All who come to Him by faith, even as He said, "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me." To all of these Jesus gives eternal life.

3. *And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.* Do you know God? Do you know Jesus Christ? Are you on speaking terms, on loving terms with them? Are They your Friends? Then you have eternal life, for, "this is life eternal, that they might know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent."

4-6. *I have glorified You on the earth: I have finished the work which You gave Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify You Me with Your own Self with the glory which I had with You before the world was. I have manifested Your name unto 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.* What a sweet thing for the Lord Jesus to say of that poor, much-erring company of disciples, "They have kept Your Word"! "They have not been all they might have been, nor all they ought to have been, but, O My Father, they have kept Your Word!" I trust that we may be found faithful to the Truths of God that the Holy Spirit has taught us, and obedient to its precepts, that our Lord may be able to say to His Father concerning us, also, "They have kept Your Word."

7, 8. *Now they have known that all things to whatever You have given Me are of You. For I have given unto 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.* See how the Lord Jesus, Himself, takes all His teaching from the Father. You never hear from Him any boast about being the originator of profound thoughts. No, He just repeated to His disciples the Words He had received from the Father—"I have given unto them the Words which You gave Me." If Jesus acted thus, how much more must the messengers of God receive the Word from the Lord's mouth and speak it as they receive it!

9, 10. *I pray for them: I pray not for the world but for them which You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine: and I am glorified in them.* Is not this a wonderful prayer? If anybody possessing the greatest possible inventive faculty were asked to produce a prayer which could be fitly prayed by a Person who was both God and Man, it would be an impossible task! This chapter has about it all the air of truthfulness. It ought to be sufficient to convince any man that Christ was God and Man. There is such a wonderful mixing of the two Natures without any confusion of ideas, so manifestly does He plead as Man, and yet so clearly does He also pray as none but the Son of God could pray, that He must be the God-Man, the one Mediator between God and man!

11, 12. *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your own name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one, as We are. 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.* It was known and foretold that Judas would be lost. Therefore, the Savior, the great Keeper of the sheep, is not to be held responsible for the loss of, "the son of perdition," who was never committed to His charge.

13-17. *And now come I to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves. 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 evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Your Truth: Your Word is Truth.* Our Divine Lord seems to think nothing about His own sufferings! All His thoughts are occupied with that which concerns His people. All His prayers are for *them*, that they may be made holy, and that so God may be glorified in them.

18, 19. *As You have sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself.* Or, "I set myself apart."

19, 20. *That they, also, might be sanctified through the Truth. Neither pray I for these, alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word.* They were only a handful of disciples, but you cannot tell what a multitude will believe on Christ through their word! There were but 12 Apostles yet John beheld a hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel and, after that, he beheld a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, standing before the Throne of God, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and with palms in their hands! The Savior doubtless linked His little band of disciples with the ancient promise, "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains, the fruit thereof shall

shake like Lebanon." What great events from little causes, spring! Whenever You are doing good, remember not only those who are immediately saved, but the others who will be blessed through them, even as our Savior said, "Neither pray I for these, alone, but for them, also, which shall believe on Me through their word." We who have believed on Jesus, through the Word preached or written by the Apostles, are also included in this prayer of their Lord and ours. Notice what our Savior asked of His Father for them and for us—

21. *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 when Christians, being one in Christ, and one in the Truth of God, shall become more manifestly one in heart, and life, and faith—what glad days we may hope to see!

22, 23. *And the glory which You gave Me I have given them: that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and them 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.* This is a wonderful expression! Where will you find anything like it? It is, indeed, marvelous that God should have loved His people even as He loved Christ, His Son, yet that is what the Lord Jesus here says—"You have sent Me, and have loved them, as You have loved Me."

24-26. *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 unto them Your name—*

"Your Character, Your work"

26. *And will declare it: that the love wherewith You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them.* This prayer is for You and for Me, as much as for the 12 Apostles. May the Lord fulfill it in all of us as well as in them, for His dear name's sake! Amen.

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