

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE RULE AND REWARD OF SERVING CHRIST.

A Sermon

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DELIVERED BY

C. H. SPURGEON,

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“If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.”—John xii. 26.

THIS verse is all about serving, and service; three times over you get the word “serve” or “servant.” Each clause of our text has in it a part of the verb “to serve.” You cannot have Christ if you will not serve him. If you take Christ, you must take him in all his characters, not only as Friend, but also as Master; and if you are to become his disciple, you must also become his servant. I hope that no one here kicks against that truth. Surely it is one of our highest delights on earth to serve our Lord, and this is to be our blessed employment even in heaven itself: “His servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face.”

This thought also enters into our idea of salvation; to be saved, means that we are rescued from the slavery of sin, and brought into the delightful liberty of the servants of God. O Master, thou art such a glorious Lord that serving thee is perfect freedom, and sweetest rest! Thou hast told us that it should be so, and we have found it so. “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” We do find it so; and it is not as though rest were a separate thing from service, the very service itself becomes rest to our souls. I know not how some of us would have any rest on earth if we could not employ our daily lives in the service of Christ; and the rest of heaven is never to be pictured as idleness, but as constantly being permitted the high privilege of serving the Lord.

Learn hence, then, all of you who would have Christ as your Saviour, that you must be willing to serve him. We are not saved *by*

service, but we are saved *to* service. When we are once saved, thenceforward we live in the service of our Lord. If we refuse to be his servants, we are not saved, for we still remain evidently the servants of self, and the servants of Satan. Holiness is another name for salvation; to be delivered from the power of self-will, and the domination of evil lusts, and the tyranny of Satan,—this is salvation. Those who would be saved must know that they will have to serve Christ, and those who are saved rejoice that they are serving him, and that thus they are giving evidence of a change of heart and renewal of mind.

Come, beloved, and when the text says, "If any man serve me," let each of us read his own name there, and let us say, "Yes, I would serve the Lord Jesus Christ." If we cannot read our own name there as yet, let us pray God that we may first believe in Jesus unto eternal life, and then, receiving that eternal life, may spend the full force and strength of it in his service. I hope that I am addressing a large number of those who are workers together with God, who have said concerning their great King as Ittai said to David, "Surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be." You have taken up Christ's cross, it has become a delightful burden to you, and you wish to bear it after Jesus as long as you live. May you be helped in that desire by the consideration of the passage before us!

First, here is *the rule of service*: "If any man serve me, let him follow me." Secondly, here is *the fellowship of service*: "Where I am, there shall also my servant be." And thirdly, here is *the reward of service*: "If any man serve me, him will my Father honour."

I. First, dear friends, here is THE RULE OF SERVICE: "If any man serve me, let him follow me."

So you are proposing to yourself that you will serve Christ, are you? You are a young man, as yet you have plenty of vigour and strength, and you say to yourself, "I will serve Christ in some remarkable way; I will seek to make myself a scholar, I will try to learn the art of oratory, and I will in some way or other glorify my Lord's name by the splendour of my language." Will you, dear friend? Is it not better, if you are going to serve Christ, to ask him what he would like you to do? If you wished to do a kindness for a friend, you certainly would desire to know what would best please that friend, or else your kindness might be mistaken, and you might be doing that which would grieve rather than gratify. Now listen. Your Lord and Master does not bid you become either a scholar or an orator in order to serve him. Both of those things may happen to fall to your lot in that path of duty which he would have you to take; but first of all he says, "If any man serve me, let him follow me."

This is what Christ prefers beyond anything else, that his servants should follow him. If we do that, we shall serve him in the way which is according to his own choice. I notice that many good friends desire to serve Christ by standing on the top round of the ladder. You cannot get there at one step, young man; your better way will be to serve Christ by following him, by "doing the next thing," the thing you can do, that little simple business which lies within your capacity,

which will bring you no special honour, but which, nevertheless, is what your Lord desires of you. In effect, you can hear him say to you, "If any man serve me, let him follow me, not by aiming at great things, but by doing just that piece of work that I put before him at the time." "Seekest thou great things for thyself?" said the prophet Jeremiah to Baruch, "seek them not." So say I to you.

One friend here, perhaps, blessed with great riches, is saying to himself or herself, "I will lay by in store until I acquire a considerable amount, and then build a row of almshouses for the poor; I will give very largely to some new foreign missionary effort, or I will build a house of prayer in which Christ's name shall be preached." God forbid that I should stop you in any right design whatever! Still, if you would do what is absolutely certain to please Christ, I would not recommend the selection of any one particular object, but I would advise you just to do this,—follow him, remembering that he said, "If any man serve me, let him follow me." You will, by simply going behind your Master, following his footsteps, and being truly his disciple, do that which would please him more than if you could endow his cause with a whole mint of riches. This is what he selects as the choicest proof of your love, the highest testimonial of your regard: "If any man serve me, let him follow me."

What, then, does the Saviour mean by bidding us render to him our best service by following him? I should say, first, I understand by these words that we are to follow Christ by *believing his doctrine*. Our Lord says, practically, "If any man serve me, let him follow me as Teacher; let him sit at my feet, let him learn of me." Some seem to fancy that they can serve Christ by striking out a new line of thought. My dear sir, if you do that, you will serve yourself, but you will not serve Christ. He has come to be the Teacher of the glorious gospel of the blessed God, and it is only by teaching the truths which he has made known, and by publishing the message which he has revealed, that you can really be his servant. Suppose you have a man to be your servant at home,—say, your gardener. He is a very industrious man indeed, and works very hard; but when you walk round your garden, you do not see him, and for a very good reason, for he is not there. Where is he? He is at work in your neighbour's garden! Of course, you love your neighbour as yourself, so you are pleased to think that your servant is working on behalf of your neighbour. You smile, do you? I think you say to yourself, "That is a kind of servant that I should not care to keep; if he worked for somebody else all day long, in the time for which I paid him, I should not want him as my servant." Well now, if I, as a Christian minister, become a teacher of philosophy, instead of a preacher of the truths of the gospel, if I receive into my mind some of the novel views that abound in the present day, which are not the views that are revealed in the Scriptures, then Christ is not my Master, and I am not his disciple, I am a follower of somebody else. If you act thus, you are pretending to be Christ's reformer, you are attempting to make his teaching better. Impious fool! I dare not use a milder expression. You are acting as Christ's critic; you are finding fault with the Faultless, you are trying to correct the Infallible; you had better give up such a task as

that, for it is not consistent with being his disciple. He requires of you that you should become as a little child, that you may be taught by him. His own words are, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." If you would be a servant of Christ, come to him as a little child; sit on the infants' form, to be taught by him the gospel A B C. "If any man serve me, let him follow me,—follow me as my disciple, regarding me as his Teacher, to whom he bows his understanding and his entire mind, that I may fashion it according to my own will." This is the language of our Lord, and I would impress it very earnestly upon you all, and especially upon any who are beginning the Christian life. If you are to serve Christ, put your mind like a tablet of wax under his *stylus*, that he may write on you whatsoever he pleases. Be you Christ's slate, that he may make his mark on you. Be his sheet of paper on which he may write his living letters of love. You can serve him in this way in the best possible manner.

But next, I think that the text means, "If any man serve me, let him follow me by *obeying my commands*." A fortnight ago,* we considered that most instructive text, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." I would bring that text to your notice again, and ring it like a bell: "Whatsoever HE saith unto you, do it." If you want truly to serve Christ, do not do what you suggest to yourself, but do what he commands you. Remember what Samuel said to Saul, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." I believe that the profession of consecration to God, when it is accompanied by action that I suggest to myself, may be nothing but will-worship, an abomination in the sight of God; but when anyone says to the Lord, "What wilt thou have me to do? Show me, my Master, what thou wouldst have me to do,"—when there is a real desire to obey every command of Christ, then is there the true spirit of service, and the true spirit of sonship. "If any man serve me, let him follow me, running at my call, following at my heels, waiting at my feet to do whatsoever I desire him to do." Dear friends, this makes life a very much simpler thing than some dream it to be. You are not to go and carve a statue out of the marble by the exercise of your own genius; if that were the task set before us, the most of us would never accomplish it. But you have just to go and write according to Christ's own example, to copy his letters, the up-strokes and the down-strokes, and to write exactly as he has written. The other day, I was asked to sign my name to a deed, and when it was handed to me, I said, "Why, I have signed my name!" "Yes," said the one who brought it, "you have the very easy task of marking it all over again." Just so, in that case I followed my own writing; and you have the easy task of writing after Christ, blacking over again the letters that he himself has made, and you cannot do him better service than this. "If any man serve me, let him follow me; that is, let him do just what I bid him to do."

Now, thirdly, I think that by these words our Lord means—and this is the same thing in another shape, "If any man serve me, let

* See *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 2,317, "Obeying Christ's Orders."

him follow me by *imitating my example.*" It is always safe, dear friends, to do what Christ would have done under the same circumstances in which you are placed. Of course, you cannot imitate Christ in his miraculous work, and you are not asked to imitate him in some of those sorrowful respects in which he suffered that we might not suffer; but the ordinary life of Christ is in every respect an example to us. Never do what you could not suppose Christ would have done. If it strikes you that the course of action that is suggested to you would be un-Christly, then it is un-Christian, for the Christian is to be like Christ. The Christian is to be the flower growing out of the seed, Christ; and there is always a congruity between the flower and the seed out of which it grows. Keep your eyes fixed on your heavenly model, and pattern, and seek in all things ever to imitate Christ. If you want to serve Christ, repeat his life as nearly as possible in your own life. "If any man serve me, let him follow me by copying my example."

Once more, I think the Saviour means this: "If any man serve me, let him follow me by *clinging to my cause.*" Cling to the cause of Christ, dear friend, give yourself to that kingdom for which you are taught to pray, and be ready to make any sacrifice whatever that you may advance and extend it. Yea, throw your whole self into the holy service of your Lord; make the name of Christ to be more widely known, and the cause of Christ to be further extended among the sons of men. Cling to the cause of Christ, and so carry out his own words, "If any man serve me, let him follow me."

Beloved, I believe that every Christian person should follow Christ in the waters of baptism, and, having done that, should join the Church of Christ, not so much to follow the Church, as to follow Christ. We are not to follow men, even the best of men, any farther than they follow Christ; but we must take care that we do boldly stand up as adherents of his cause, so that, if it be asked, "Who is on the Lord's side?" we may put in an appearance directly, and avow ourselves as his followers. Are you living in a village where there is no congregation of the faithful? Then, let it be known that you are on the Lord's side, and do your best to open a place where Christ can be preached. Do you live down some dark part of this city where nobody goes to a place of worship? Such places are, alas! very common in this dreadful London. Then, be sure that you go to the house of God, and your very going there will be a form of serving Christ, for others will see that you at least take a decided step, and join in public worship with the avowed followers of Christ. If you would really serve Christ, come right out from the world, and say, "Let others do as they will, as for me and my house we belong to Christ, and we will never hide our colours. We will bind the scarlet thread in the window, and we will let all who come by this way understand that here live those who have been redeemed with precious blood, and who therefore cannot, dare not, and will not conceal the gracious fact." "If any man serve me, let him follow me by taking up my cause, and working for it with all his heart."

I hope that I do not need to dwell any longer on this point. You all see that the way in which to serve Christ is not a visionary one.

You do not need to run away from your father and mother, and leave your home and friends, and go away to the blacks in Africa, in order to serve Christ. It is not the getting of some idle speculation in your own brain, and working that out according to your own whims and fancies, that constitutes service of Christ; it is just simply this,—if any man will serve Christ, let him follow Christ. Let him put his foot down as nearly as he can where Christ put his foot down; let him tread in Christ's steps, and be moved by his spirit, actuated by his motives, live with his aim, and copy his actions. This is the noblest way in which to serve the Lord.

II. Now secondly, and briefly, let us notice THE FELLOWSHIP OF SERVICE: "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be." I do not know any other master but Christ who ever said that. There are some places where an earthly master does not want his servant to be; he must have some room to himself, and some engagements which he cannot explain to his servant, and into which his servant must not pry. But the Lord Jesus Christ makes this the glorious privilege of every one who enters his service that, where he is, there shall his servant be.

And where is he, I pray? He is in heaven, and we cannot go to him there until he calls us home. But where is he? Where was he when he spoke these words? He was, first, *in the place of consecration*. The Lord Jesus Christ stood before the Father a consecrated man. All that there was in him was dedicated to the glory of God. Now, go and serve him by following him, and he will put you into the place of dedication, consecration, sanctification. You desire to be holy; well, you will never attain to holiness simply by lying in bed; get up and work for Jesus if you are able to do so. And you cannot get holiness merely by studying books; serve your Lord, and serve him especially by following him. It is in the sacred process of active obedience, or of passive obedience, that we get the consecration which is not to be found, as some think, by merely willing it, and talking of it, but which grows out of holy service. As rivers, when they take up sewage, are said to drop it as they flow, and purify themselves as they run, so, assuredly, it is with a believer as he flows on in his Christian course. God blessing him, he drops much of the earthiness which he has taken up in his progress through life, and by the very motion he seems to purify himself, refining as he runs. I notice that people who have nothing to do but to sit down and stare into the black hole of their own nature, are generally very sad, and not often very virtuous; but they who, knowing how dark and sinful their nature is, trust Jesus for salvation, and then spend their lives in doing the will of the Lord, these are they who are both holy and happy.

But where is Christ?—for he says, "Where I am, there shall also my servant be." He is and always was in *the place of communion with God*. He was always near to his Father. He often spoke with God. He ever had the joy of God filling his spirit. And you, perhaps, are saying to yourself, "I wish that I had communion with God." Well, through Jesus Christ, it is to be had by serving him in that particular kind of service which consists in following him. If you want to walk with

God, why, of course, you must *walk*! If you sit down in idleness, you cannot walk with him; and if you do not keep up a good brisk pace, he will walk on in front of you, and leave you behind, for the Lord is no laggard in his walking. Therefore, you see, there must be diligent progress, and activity in service, in order that we may keep pace with him, and have communion with him; and if we act thus here, he has promised that we shall be in the place of communion with our blessed Master.

Further than this, our Lord Jesus Christ was *in the place of confidence*. Whenever Christ went to work, he worked with assurance. He never had a doubt as to his ultimate success. No haphazard work ever came from Christ's hands. He spoke with certainty, and he worked with the full assurance that his labour would not be in vain. If you want to have confidence in your work for Christ, so as to perform it without any doubts and fears, you will have to obtain it by serving him, and to serve him by following him; and then, into that hallowed place of confidence where your Master always stood, there shall you also come.

Our Lord stood, too, *in the place of holy calm*. How unruffled he was at all times! His was a life of storms, yet a life of peace; all around him moved, but he was the Rock of Ages, and never moved. Would you not like to be calm as Christ was, to dwell with him on the serene heights while the tempests roll and thunder far below your feet? Well, then, serve him by following him; and, as you do so, the promise of the text shall be fulfilled to you, "Where I am, there shall also my servant be."

And oh, blessed be his name! he has actually gone *into the place of conquest and victory in the eternal world*, and you and I shall be there with him in his own good time. "Where I am, there shall also my servant be." Count it no dishonour to be servants when this high favour is promised you, that where your Master is, there you shall be also. I have sometimes thought that, if I could get into heaven somewhere behind the door, and just sit there, I should be perfectly satisfied; but far more than that is promised to us. Wherever Christ is, there shall we be. If he is on a throne, we shall be enthroned, too; and, if he is at the Father's right hand, we shall be at the Father's right hand, for he has promised, "Where I am, there shall also my servant be." You need not want to know much about heaven; it is where Christ is, and that is heaven enough for us. If we could once go into the courts above, and ask, "Is my Lord Jesus here?" and they should answer, "No, he is not here," it would be no heaven to us, would it? We should want to go outside the city walls, and cry, "Show me where he is." But suppose it possible for us to be in the very lowest room of heaven, where the glories were veiled, as it were,—if such a place could be;—and if we could hear one truly say, "There he is," its glories would not be any longer veiled, and we should need no higher heaven than that. As soon as ever we saw him, we should say, as our friend did in prayer, "He is all the heaven we want to know." Remember that blessed verse we had in our reading, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory."

This, then, is the great fellowship of holy service; who would not be a servant of Christ?

III. Now, as our time is nearly spent, I must speak but briefly upon THE REWARD OF SERVICE, upon which I have entrenched already: "If any man serve me, him will my Father honour."

It is very sweet to notice how the Lord Jesus brings his Father into his speech; it is as if he said, "When a man joins himself to me, then he joins himself to my Father also. It is not only I who will love him, and do my best to honour him, but my Father, the great and ever-blessed Lord over all, keeps an eye on that man." On whom does he look with this gaze of approval? Not on those who have some grand project of serving themselves, but on those who serve Christ, and who do it by following him. Come, dear people of God, you are many of you very poor, yet I know that many of you are seeking to serve Christ by following him. Some of God's dear servants here are no great speakers; they are very quiet, humble Christians, but they are trying to do what Christ would do if he were in their position. If this is your case, dear friends, you are honouring your Lord, and the Father himself looks approvingly upon you.

"If any man serve me," says our Lord, "him will my Father honour." How will he do it? Well, he will honour him *by letting him know his sonship*. Because Jesus always pleased the Father, the Father bare witness to him, saying, "This is my beloved Son." And if you serve Christ by following him, the Father will often bear witness in your heart, and says, "This also is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." He will often cause the Spirit of adoption to renew the witness in your heart, so that you will cry, "Abba, Father," and he will be the kindred own. Surely, there is no greater honour than for God to own you as his son.

Next, he will honour you *by giving you a sense of approval*. You know what that means; I will tell you when it is very sweet. You have been doing something for Christ, you have done it with all your heart; and some friend picks holes in it, and someone not quite so much a friend, and who therefore cannot so sorely wound you, begins to impute wrong motives, and to judge you for having come down to the battle because of the pride and the naughtiness of your heart. Well, you lose a friend, and you get a double number of enemies round about you; yet in your heart you feel that you did it only for Christ. Well, then, at such a time, it is delightful to have a sense of the approbation of God, such as you never had when you had the approbation of men. Sometimes, when even Christian people cry, "Well done, well done," the Lord says, "That is quite enough praise for him; I shall not give him my 'Well done.'" But when you get no "Well done" from men, but, on the contrary, are misunderstood and misrepresented, then the Lord comes and puts his hand upon you, and says, "Be strong, fear not, I have accepted your service. I know your motive, and I approve your action. Be not afraid of them, but go on your way." Ah, beloved! such approval as that is the highest honour we can have here. "If any man serve me," says Christ, "him will my Father honour," with a sense of sonship, and with a sense of approbation.

If any man serve Christ, there is another kind of honour that often comes to him, and it is not to be despised. If a man will serve Christ by following him, *the Father will give him honour in the eyes of the blood-bought family.* There are certain of the Lord's people who do not carry yard measures with them, but they carry scales and weights, and if they do not measure by quantity, they measure by quality; their approval is worth having. They are often the poorest and most afflicted members of the church; but being the most instructed, and living the nearest to God, to be had in honour of them is a thing worth having. I believe that, if any man will live the life of a Christian, however few his talents, and if his service lies in close obedience and imitation of Christ, the real saints, not the mere professors, especially not the shining worldly ones among them, but real saints will say, "That is the man for us; that is the woman with whom we like to converse." Thus it comes to pass that those who really do serve the Lord by following him have honour in the estimation of those who sit at meat with them at their Lord's table.

And then, at last, when we come to die, or when we stand at the judgment seat of Christ, or when we enter upon the eternal state, *what a glorious thing it will be, to find the Father ready to honour us for ever because we served the Son!* Our reward will not be of debt, but of grace; it is grace that gave us the service, and grace that will reward us for our service; but no man and no woman shall serve the Lord Jesus Christ here on earth by following him, without finding that the Father has some special honour, some rich and rare reward, to give to such soldiers in due time. This is the fighting day, expect nothing now but bullets, bruises, wounds, scars; but the battle will soon be over, and when the war is ended, the King will come, and ride up and down the ranks, and in that day you who have been most battered and most wounded in the battle shall find him pause when he reaches you, and he will fasten on your breast a star that shall be more honour to you than all the Victoria Crosses that have decorated brave men here below. Stars and garters they may have who want them, but blessed are they who shall shine as the stars in the kingdom of our Father! And this honour is to be had by that believer who will faithfully serve his Lord; not by any who merely talk about it, or dream of it, or propose to do it, but to those who serve him by following him this honour shall be given.

I have preached all this to God's people, but I have not said anything to you who are not his people. I cannot invite you to his service as you are; how can you serve him while you are his enemies? I do not invite you unconverted people to work for God. Oh, no! he wants no such servants as you are, he will not have rebels in his host. First bow your knee in submission, lay down the weapons of your rebellion; then fly to Christ for mercy, trust in him for forgiveness; and then, but not till then, you may come, and serve him, and follow him, and expect that his Father will honour you as he has promised. God bless you, for Jesu's sake! Amen.

Exposition by C. H. Spurgeon.

JOHN XVII.

This chapter contains the marvellous prayer of our Great High Priest. May the Holy Spirit apply its teaching to our hearts as we read it!

Verse 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:*

The great design of Christ, all through his life on earth, was to glorify the Father. He came to save his people; but that was not his first or his chief aim. It was his object, through the salvation of myriads of the sons of men, to glorify the Father.

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

Here we have both the universality and the speciality of the work of divine mercy. Christ has power over all flesh, men are in the power of the one Mediator, but there is this special object ever before him: "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.*

This does not mean mere head-knowledge; but to know in the heart and soul the one only true God, and Jesus Christ who was sent of him to the sons of men, "this is life eternal." God without Christ brings not eternal life, and Christ, if he were not sent of God, would not bring eternal life to us; but knowing God in Christ Jesus is eternal life.

4. *I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.*

Here our Saviour speaks by anticipation. He foresaw that he would pass through his passion, that all the work of his people's redemption would be fully accomplished, and in this his final prayer on earth to the Father he could truly say, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." May you and I be able to say the same when we depart out of this world! Not boastingly,—there was no boasting in our Lord,—but truthfully, conscientiously, from the bottom of our heart may each one of us be able to say, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do"!

5. *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

After the finished work, Christ was to have the glory. O worker for God, seek not glory before thy work is done! Expect not honour among men because thou hast begun the work so earnestly; plod on until it is finished, then shall the glory come. "Verily I say unto you, they have their reward," said our Lord concerning the scribes and Pharisees who sought the praise of men; but you have not your reward at present, it is yet to come. Wait for it, for it is sure to come.

6. *I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.*

How tenderly he speaks about them! He says the best he can of them; they were a faulty, feeble folk, but he says, "They have kept thy word." So they did. Oh, that you and I may do the same, and not be swept away by the drift of the current of unbelief! If we are not perfect, if we fail in some respects, yet may the Master be able to say of us to God, "They have kept thy word"!

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

How the blessed Christ loves to lay aside all honour to himself even in his own gospel! He said that the things which he had taught to his disciples were not his own, they were the Father's. The Father always honours the Son, and the Son takes care always to honour the Father.

8—10. *For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.*

Every true child of God glorifies Christ; and if you cannot say that you are glorifying Christ, you should question whether you really belong to him. If you are his, it is true of you, "I am glorified in them,"—not only by them, but in them,—“in their suffering with patience, in their labouring with diligence, in their faith, in their trustfulness in me, ‘I am glorified in them.’”

11. *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world,—*

We also know that we, too, are in the world; we have good reason to feel it, and sometimes to mourn it.

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.*

When God keeps us, he keeps us in unity; our divisions are not the result of his work. When we get away from his keeping, and get away from his Word, then we are sundered in heart from him and from one another; but by his keeping he keeps his children one.

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.*

The Scripture was fulfilled in the preservation of his own, and also fulfilled in the destruction of the traitor. God's Word will be fulfilled anyhow. Oh, that it may be to us a savour of life unto life, that we may be kept by it; and not a savour of death unto death, as it was to Judas, who was blinded by the very light that shone upon him! That fierce light that beat about the King of kings fell on him, and it blinded him eternally. God save us from such an awful doom as that!

13. *And now come I to thee;*

I can only read you this wonderful chapter, but what must it have been to have heard it! I think I see the look on the Saviour's face as he says to his Father, "And now come I to thee." May something like that look be on your faces, my beloved, when your last moments come! Looking away from your dear ones whom you must leave as Jesus left his disciples, may you each one be able to say, "And now come I to thee"!

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

While he drained the cup of sorrow to the dregs, and went forward to all the agonies of the cruel cross, he wanted his disciples to have his joy fulfilled in them, that they might be filled full with his joy.

14. *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.*

This does not look like trying to please the world, to adapt our method to the spirit of the age, to come as near to the world as ever we can, to dabble in its politics, and join in its schemes. This has to me a very different tone in it from all that.

15. *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world,—*

Christ and his people did not go together out of the world all at once ; that would have been to leave the world in an utterly forlorn condition, without any help whatever ; so he says to his Father, “ I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world,—”

15, 16. *But that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

You cannot make Christ a worldling ; do what you will with his character, twist it as you like, you must see that there is something unworldly, other-worldly, about him. So let it always be with his people.

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

Thank God for that : “ Thy word is truth.” Not, “ Thy word contains the truth with an admixture of error ;” or, “ Thy word has some truth in it ;” no, but, “ Thy word is truth.” Not only is it true, but it is truth, the very essential truth.

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,—*

“ I separate myself to this work, I dedicate, devote, consecrate myself wholly for their sakes,—”

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

This little handful of disciples who had been gathered to his name,—

20. *But for them also which shall believe on me through their word ;*

Thank God that he will bless our word as well as his own Word ! When our word is based upon his Word, when we do but expound what Christ has given us to say, then men shall believe on him through our word.

21—23. *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 : 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.*

This is a wonderful expression. Does the Father love his people as he loves Christ ? Then his love to them must be without beginning, without change, without measure, without end. Oh, it would ravish your heart, it would carry you away to the very heaven of heavens, if you could get the full meaning of this expression, “ and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” !

24. *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.*

This is Christ's last will and testament : “ Father, I will.” It is not merely his prayer, but he makes this as one clause in his will, that all whom the Father gave him should be with him to behold his glory. And it will be so, beloved. He will not lose one of his own. He will never drop from that dear pierced hand any portion of the eternal gift of his Father.

25, 26. *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.*

Here the doctrine becomes a matter of experience. May we never rest till we get the full experience of it, that the very love which God gives to Christ may be found in our hearts shed abroad by the Holy Ghost ! Amen.