Christ's Prayer for His People

by C.H. Spurgeon

Jesus prays that we should not be taken out of the world because it is for our own good, for the good of others, and for God's glory.

Scripture: John 17:15, Romans 8:34, Philippians 1:21
Topics: "Purpose in Trials", "Intercession"

Description

C.H. Spurgeon emphasizes the significance of Christ's prayer for His people, highlighting that every believer has a personal stake in this intercession. He explains that Jesus does not pray for believers to be taken out of the world, either through solitude or death, but rather to be kept from evil, as their presence serves a greater purpose for their own growth, the benefit of others, and the glory of God. Spurgeon encourages believers to embrace their earthly struggles as opportunities for spiritual growth and to fulfill their mission of bringing others to Christ. He warns against the desire to escape life's challenges, reminding that true faith is demonstrated in how one lives, not merely in how one dies.

Transcript

This prayer of Christ is an ever precious portion to all true believers, from the fact that each of them has an inalienable interest in it. Every one of us, beloved, when we listen to the words of Christ should recollect that he is praying for us; that while it is for the great body of his elect he intercedes in this chapter and the one preceding it, yet it is also for each believer in particular that he offers intercession. However weak we are, however poor; however little our faith, or however small our grace may be, our names are still written on his heart; nor shall we lose our share in Jesus' love.

I will proceed at once to the discussion of the text as my time is limited. First, there is a negative prayer: "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world;" second, here is a positive prayer; but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

We have then a negative prayer in this verse. "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world." Now, beloved, when we see persons converted to God, when men are turned front iniquity unto righteousness, from sinners into saints, the thought sometimes strikes us-would it not be good to take them at once to heaven, would it not be an excellent thing to translate them speedily from the realms of sin to the breast of the Lord who loved them with an everlasting love? Would it not be wiser to take the young plants out of the chilly air of this world, where they may possibly be injured and weakened, and transplant them at once to the land where they may bloom in peace and tranquility for ever? Not so, however, does

Jesus pray. When the man had the devils cast out of him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, I would follow thee whithersoever thou goest." But Jesus said to him, "Go to thy friends and relations, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee." Some men when they are converted are all for going speedily to heaven; but they have not done with earth yet. They would like to wear the crown without bearing the cross, they desire to win without running, and conquer without a battle, but their whim has no countenance from Jesus, for he exclaims, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world."

I shall first of all speak of the meanings of this prayer; secondly, the reasons of this prayer; thirdly, the doctrinal inferences that we may derive from it; and fourthly, the practical lessons it teaches. Briefly on each point.

First. THE MEANINGS OF THIS PRAYER. "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world." Now, there are two senses in which this prayer may be understood. One is,-he prays not that they should, by retirement and solitude, be kept entirely separate from the world; and the second,-he asks not that they should be taken away by death.

First, as regards retirement from the World and solitude. Some hermits and others have fancied that if we were to shut ourselves from the world and live alone, we should then be more devoted to God and serve him better. Many men of old lived in deserts, never coming into the cities, wandering about alone, praying in caves and forests, and thinking they were contaminated, and rendered impure if once they mingled with mankind. So have we among the Roman Catholics, persons who act the part of hermits, living far from the common haunts of men, and conceiving that by so doing they shall abundantly serve God. There are also certain orders of monks and nuns who live almost alone, seeing only their fellows, and fancying that by seclusion they are putting honor upon God, and winning salvation for themselves. Now it is too late in the day for any of as to speak against monasticism. It has demonstrated its own fallacy. It was found that some of those men who had separated from society were guilty of more vile and vicious practices, and sinned more grossly than men who were in the world. There are not many who can depart from the customs of social life, and in solitude maintain their spirit pure and unsullied. Why, brethren, common sense tells us at once that living alone is not the way to serve God. It may be the way to serve self, and wrap ourselves in a garment of self-complacency; but it cannot be the way to worship God truly. If it be possible, by this means, to fulfil one part of the great law of God, we cannot, possibly carry out the other portion-to love our neighbour as ourselves, for we thus become unable to bind up the broken-hearted, to bring the wanderer back, or to win souls from death and sin. Out of the heart proceedeth all evil, and if we were in retirement we should sin, because we should carry our hearts with us into whatever solitude we entered. If we could but once get rid of our hearts, if there were some means of rendering our natures perfect, then we might be able to live alone; but, as we now are, that door must be well listed that would keep out the devil; that cell must be much secluded that sin cannot enter. I have heard of a man who thought he could live without sin if he were to dwell alone; so he took a pitcher of water and a store of bread, and provided some wood, and shut himself up in a solitary cell saying, " Now I shall live in peace." But in a moment or two he chanced to kick the pitcher over, and he thereupon used an angry expression. Then he said, "I see it is possible to lose one's temper even when alone;" and he at once returned to live among men.

But it may be understood in a second sense. "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of this world"--by death. That is a sweet and blessed mode of taking us out of the world, which will happen to us all by-and-by. In a few more years the chariot of fire and the horses of fire will take away the Lord's soldiers. But Jesus does not pray that one of his chosen people should be too soon removed, he does not desire to

see his newly begotten souls plume their wings and fly aloft to heaven until their time shall come. How frequently does the wearied pilgrim put up the prayer, "O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest." But Christ does not pray like that; he leaves it to his Father, until, like shocks of corn fully ripe, we shall each of us be gathered into our Master's garner. Jesus does not plead for our immediate removal by death. He asks that we may do well in the world, but he never asks for us to be gathered in before we are ripe. Thus I have explained the two meanings of the words, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world"-either by living retired from men, or being taken away by death.

Now the second point WAS THE REASON FOR THIS PETITION. These reasons are threefold, Christ does not pray that we should be taken out of the world, because our abode here is for our own good, for the world's benefit, and for his glory.

First, it would not be for our own good to be taken out of this world. I leave out the first idea of the text, and only speak of it concerning death. We conceive that the greatest blessing we shall ever receive of God is to die; but doubtless it would not be for our good to withdraw from this world as soon as we had escaped from sin. It is better for us to tarry little while; far better. And the reasons for this are - first, because a little stay on earth will make heaven all the sweeter.

Nothing makes rest so sweet as toil; nothing can render security so pleasant as a long exposure to alarms, and fears, and battles. No heaven will be so sweet as a heaven, which has been preceded by torments and pains. Methinks the deeper draughts of woe we drink here below, the sweeter will be those draughts of eternal glory which we shall receive from the golden bowls of bliss; the more we are battered and scarred on earth the more glorious will be our victory above, when the shouts of a thousand times ten thousand angels welcome us to our Father's palace.

The more trials the more bliss, the more sufferings the more ecstasies, the more depression the higher the exaltation. Thus we shall gain more of heaven by the sufferings we shall pass through here below. Let us not then, my brethren, fear to advance through our trials: they are for our good; to stop here awhile is for our benefit. Why! we should not know how to converse in heaven if we had not a few trials and hardships to tell of, and some tales of delivering grace to repeat with joy.

An old sailor likes to have passed through a few shipwrecks and storms, however hazardous they may have been, for he anchors in Greenwich Hospital, he will there tell, with great pleasure, to his companions, of his hair-breadth escapes. There will be some old soldiers in heaven, too, who will recount their fights, how their Master delivered them, and how he won the victory and kept off all their foes. Again, we should not have fellowship with Christ if we did not stop here. Fellowship with Christ is so honorable a thing that it is worth while to suffer, that we may thereby enjoy it.

You have sometimes heard me express a desire that I might be in the number of those who shall be alive and remain, and so shall escape death, but a dear friend of mine says, he had rather die, in order that he might thus have fellowship with Christ in his sufferings, and methinks the thought finds an echo in my own breast. To die with Jesus makes death a perfect treasure, to be a follower in the grave with him makes death a pleasure. Moreover, you and I might be taken for cowards, although we may have fellowship with him in his glory, if we had no scars to prove the sufferings we had passed through, and the wounds we had received for his name.

Thus, again you see it is for our good to be here; we should not have known fellowship with the Saviour, if we had not tarried here a little while. I should never have known the Saviour's love half so much if I had

not been in the storms of affliction. How sweet it is to learn the Saviour's love when nobody else loves us! When friends flee away, what a blessed thing it is to see that the Saviour does not forsake us but still keeps us, and holds fast by us, and clings to us, and will not let us go! O beloved brother and sister, believe that your remaining here on earth is for your eternal benefit, and therefore Jesus said. "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world."

And again, it is for the good of other people. Methinks we should all be willing to remain on earth for the good of others. Why may not saints die as soon as they are converted? For this reason: because God meant that they should be the means of the salvation of their brethren. You would not, surely, wish to go out of the world if there were a soul to be saved by you. Methinks if I could go to glory before I had converted all the souls allotted to me, I should not be happy; but that would be impossible, for God will not shut his saints in till they have been spiritual fathers to those appointed. We do not wish to enter heaven till our work is done, for it would make us uneasy on our beds if there were one single soul left to be saved by our means. Tarry, then, Christian; there is there is a brand to be plucked out of the fire, a sinner to be saved from his sins, a rebel to be turned from the error of his ways, and may hap that sinner is one of thy relatives. May hap, poor widow, that art spared in this world, because there is a wayward son of thine not yet saved, and God hath designed to make thee the favored instrument of bringing him to glory. And thou hoary-headed Christian, it may be that though "the grasshopper is a burden to thee," and thou longest to go, thou art kept here because one of thy offspring, by thy instrumentality, is yet to be saved. Tarry, then, for thy son's sake, who came from thy loins. I know how deeply then dost love him, and for his sake surly thou art content to be left here a little, counting it for the best that thou mayest bring in thy son to glory with the.

But the third mason is because it is for God's glory. A tried saint brings more glory to God than an untried one. I do verily think in my own soul that a believer in a dungeon reflects more glory on his Master than a believer in paradise, that a child of God in the burning fiery furnace, whose hair is yet unscorched. and upon whom the smell of the fire has not passed, displays more the glory of Godhead than even he who stands with a crown upon his head, perpetually singing praises before the Fathers throne. Nothing reflects so much honor on a workman as a trial of his work, and its endurance of it. So with God. It honors him when his saints preserve their integrity. Peter honored Christ more when he walked upon the water, than when he stood upon the land. There was no glory given to God by his walking on the solid shore, but there was glory reflected when he trod upon the water. Peter saw the Lord coming on the water, and he said to him, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water to go to Jesus." What may we not go through, Christians, at his command? O methinks we could rise and cut Agag to pieces, and hew the devil himself and break his head, through the power of Jesus. It is then for the glory of Jesus that we yet tarry. If my lying in the dust would elevate Christ one inch higher, I would say, "O let me remain, for it is sweet! to be here for the Lord." And if to live here for ever would make Christ more glorious, I would prefer to live here eternally. If we could but add more jewels to the crown of Christ by remaining here, why should we wish to be taken out of the world? We should say, "It is blessed to be anywhere, where we can glorify him."

The third point is THE DOCTRINAL INFERENCE WE MAY DERIVE FROM THIS PRAYER.

The first inference - Death is God taking the people out of the world; and when we die we are removed by God. Death is not an independent being, who comes at his own will, to carry us away when he pleases. In fact, it is not true that death does take away the Christian at all: God alone can remove his children from this world. Whether the humble peasant, or the reigning monarch, one hand lifts them to the sky. You will

see this by referring to the Revelation where the vintage of the wicked is gathered by an angel, but the harvest of the righteous is reaped by Christ himself. " And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over the fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God." These were the wicked. But, if you go to the preceding passage, it says, " And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is Come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped." Christ is the reaper who cuts his own corn. He will not trust an angel to do it. God alone has the issues of life in his hand.

The next thing is that dying is not of one-half so much importance as living to Christ." I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world." He does not make their dying an object of prayer, "but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." He prays that they should be preserved in life, knowing that their death would assuredly follow rightly, as a matter of course. Many say one to the other, "Have you heard that so-and-so is dead?" "How did he die?" They should rather say, "How did he live?" It may be an important question,-how does a man die; but the most important question is, "How does a man live?" What a curious notions people get about death! The question they ask is not whether a man dies in the Lord Jesus, but, "Has he had a very easy death? Did he die gently?" If so, they conclude that all is well. If I ask, "Had he any affection to trust in Christ?" the reply probably will be, "Well, at all events, I thought he had; he had a very easy death." People think so much of an easy death. If there are no pains in death, if they are not in trouble, and not plagued like others, they falsely conclude all to be well. But though like sheep they are laid in the grave, they may awaken to destruction in the morning. It is not a sign of grace that our dying is easy. It is natural for persons in the decay of strength to die easily. Many of the most vicious men, who have destroyed the power of their bodies, have an easy, painless death, from the fact that there is nothing to struggle against death; but, then, though they die like lambs, they wake up in sorrow. Do not put any confidence in death-beds, my dear friends; do not look on them as evidences of Christianity. The greatest evidence is not how a man dies. but how he lives.

The practical lesson we learn from this part of the text-- "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world"-Is this, that we never have any encouragement peevishly to ask God to let us die. Christians are always wanting to die when they have any trouble or trial. You ask them why? "Because we would be with the Lord." O yes, they want to be with the Lord, when trouble and temptations come upon them. But it is not because they are "panting to be with the Lord," it is because they desire to get rid of their troubles -- else they would not want to die at all times when a little vexation is upon them. They want to get home, not so much for the Saviour's company, as to get out of the little hard work. They did not wish to go away when they were in quiet and prosperity. Like lazy fellows, as most of us are, when we get into a little labour we beg to go home. It is quite right sometimes that you should desire to depart, because you would not prove yourself to be a true Israelite if you did not want to go to Jerusalem. You may pray to be taken home out of the world, but Christ will not take up the petition. When your prayers come to the Lord, this little one may try to got amongst them, but Christ will say, "I do not know anything about you, 'I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world.'" You may wish it sincerely, and really desire it, but you will not at present get your Master to pray with you. Instead, then, of crying, or wishing to be away from the battle,

brace yourself up in the name of the Lord, Think every wish to escape the fight, is but a desertion of your Master. Do not so much as think of rest, but remember, that though you may cry, "Let me retire into the tent," you will not be admitted until you return a victor. Therefore, stop here, and work and labour.

My dear friends, I had intended to preach from the other half of the verse, but that is quite impossible, the time is so far gone, and I can only manage the first part thereof. So I must depart from my original intention; and I will restrict myself to some thoughts which occur to me upon the first portion of our text.

"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world." Perhaps, to-morrow you will be saying, "I am very sorry Sabbath-day is over. I am obliged to go to business again. I wish it were always Sunday, that I attend to my preaching, or to the schools, or to the prayer-meeting, or to the tract-distributing. No obstructions of the world afflict me there, no vexatious of the spirit occur there. I am sick of the world. Oh! if I could never go into it again." Let me jog thy elbow a bit. Does Jesus think so? Hear him! "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world." There is no remedy for the ill, if it be an ill, therefore endure it with becoming fortitude; yea, rather seek to improve the opportunity thus afforded you, of conferring a blessing upon your race, and of gaining advantages for yourselves.

The pious mind will know how to improve the very sight of sin to its own sanctification. It will learn humility when it remembers that restraining grace alone prevents a similar fault in itself, it will gather subjects for gratitude and admiration from the fact, that grace alone has made it to differ. Never shall we value grace so much as when we see the evil front which it delivers us, never shall we more abhor sin than when we discern its visible deformity. Bad society is in itself like the poisonous cassava, but if baked in the fire of grace it may even be rendered useful. True grace casts salt into the poisonous stream, and then when forced to ford it, the filth thereof is destroyed. Abide, then, O soldier, in the trenches of labour and battle, for the hardness of service is beneficial to thee.

But remember while here that thou losest no opportunity of attacking the foe. Never miss an opportunity of having a shot at the devil. Be ready on all occasion to do mischief to the enemy. In business, drop a word of savour and unction; in company, turn the conversation heavenward; in private, wrestle at the throne. I do not advise you to intrude religion at unseasonable hours. I do not conceive it to be your duty when a customer calls to pay a bill to ask him into your office and spend half an hour in prayer with him, nor would I think it needful to sanctify your ribbons and shawls by exhorting the purchasers across the counter. Some have not been quite innocent of the charge of cant who make as much use of religion to attract customers, as they do of their plate glass window. Do not talk of religion to be heard of men, but when a fair opportunity offers, out with your rifle and take a steady aim. Cromwell's singular advice to his soldiers was, "Trust in God, my friends, and keep your powder dry." In a better sense this is mine. More than all keep up a continual fire on the emeny by a holy life. Nothing will more reprove sin than your holiness. If you cannot tell the stick it Is crooked, you can prove it to be so, by laying a straight one side by side with it. So put your purity before the impure, and they will be effectually reproved.

Well then, again, do not be afraid to go out into the world to do good. Christ is keeping you in the world for the advantage of your fellow-men. I am sometimes wicked enough to think that I would rather go anywhere than stand up again and preach my Master's gospel. Like Jonah, I have thought I would really pay my fare to be carried away to Tarshish, instead of coming back to Nineveh. So would some of you who have tried to preach, and found you could not succeed as you desired. But do not be down-hearted, my brother; a Christian should never get so. If you have but one listener to-day, perhaps the next time the number will be doubled, and so on, till they cannot be counted. Never say, "I wish to go out of this world:"

do not murmur, "My life Is prolonged beyond my joys." Do what you can. Do not go amongst people with fear; do not be ashamed to look duty in the face. If you are not successful at first, do not he cowards and run away from your guns. We should do all we can to bring our guns into line with our brothers, and take good aim at our foes. Never desert your work, though you come home distressed in spirit, though you see no gleam of success, and nothing is gained. Recollect, you cannot run out of the battle, but you must go on; and you cannot escape the service. On then, and glory shall be yours.

Now, my brethren, what bearing has this text upon the ungodly? There are some here, my dear friends, of whom I have sometimes thought that I could almost pray that God should take them out of the world. I can tell you why; they are so wicked-so dreadfully wicked, such hardened reprobates, with such iron souls, that they seem as if they never would be turned to God, and whose portion it would appear to be damned themselves, and to lead others to the same condition. I know a village where there is a man so vicious, so abandoned, that I could almost pray for him to be removed out of the world; he is so awfully wicked that many of those I thought hopeful Christians have been poisoned by his example.

Indeed he seemed to be depraving the entire population. He stands like a deadly Upas tree, with outspread branches, overshadowing the whole place. He is consuming all around him; and instead of it being a mercy for him to be here, it would be like a mercy if he were gone. Are not some of you like that man? Are you not so bad that you are doing all the mischief in the world you can? You never do anything for the cause of Christ, You are always trying to do your utmost against it.

You never sow a little blade of God's grass where none grew before. You are of no service, and yet you are spared, because Jesus says, " I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world." He prays that you may be in the world a little longer. And what has he preserved you from? First, fever comes and bows thee down; but Christ says, "Let him not depart yet. O spare him now." And thou art spared. The second time, disease comes near unto thee, and great pains bow thee down.

Again he prays, "Spare him!" and thou art yet safe. The third time thou art fast approaching thy end. Now the angel of death is lifting up the glittering steel, and his axe is almost fallen on thee. Yet Christ says, "Spare him, angel! Spare him-peradventure he may yet turn to me with full purpose of heart." He whom thou hatest loved thee so much that he interceded for thee, and therefore thou wert spared till now. Remember, however, that this reprieve will not continue for ever.

At last Justice will cry; "Cut him down, he cumbers the ground." Some of you have been cumbering the ground for sixty or seventy years--old sinners; of no use in this world. Is it so? There you are occupying the ground, keeping other trees from growing, and of no use! Your family is being damned by your example; the whole neighbourhood is tainted by you. Do not tell me I should not speak so roughly. I tell you, as long as I have a tongue in my head you shall have no mincemeat from me.

If you are lost, it shall not be for want of plain speaking and honest warning. Oh, ye cumber-grounds! how much digging and dunging have ye received at the Lord's hand, and yet ye are fruitless. The axe will soon be at your root, and oh, the fire into which ye shall be cast! Ungodly man, thou art spared until thine overflowing cup of sin is dropping like oil upon the flame of vengeance, and the increasing fire will presently reach thee. The longer the archer draweth the bow the more mighty is the force of the arrow.

What though vengeance tarrieth, it is that its sword may be sharpened and its arm nerved for direr execution. Oh, ye grey-heads! a little more delay and the stroke shall fall; tremble and kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.

And yet, methinks, some of you who have cumbered the ground do most heartily desire to serve God. Poor sinner! I rejoice that thou feelest that thou hast been a cumber-ground. Dost thou confess that thou hast been a poor thorn and briar until now. Dost thou acknowledge that the Lord has been just to thee if he had damned thee? Then come as thou art and cast thyself on Jesus, without works, without merit. Wilt thou ask the Lord to turn thee into a good fig tree? If thou wilt, he will do it; for be declares, that he heareth prayer.

There was once a poor man in a small country town who had not all the sense people usually have, but he had sense enough to be a great drunkard and swearer as God would have it, he once listened to a poor woman, who was singing--

"I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all

But Jesus Christ is my all in all"

Home he went, repeating these words, he put his trust in a crucified Saviour, and was really converted. Well, he soon came to the church, and although he was a pedlar, and always travelling about, he said, "I want to join your church." They, remembering his sinful way of life, required some great evidence of a change before they received him, "O!" says he, "I must come in," "But you have been such a great sinner, and you are unconverted," added the elders. "Well," said poor Jack, "I don't know if I'm unconverted, and I confess I am a great sinner-but--

"I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all;

But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

They could not get from him any other testimony save this. He would only say--

"I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all;

But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

They could not refuse him, and therefore accepted him for fellowship. After this he was always happy. When a Christian man said to him "But you always seem so happy and pleased, John; how is it?" "Well" said he, " I ought to be happy, for--

"I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all;

But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

"Well but," said the gentleman, "I can't see how you can be always so happy and sure. I sometimes lose my evidences." "I don't," said Jack,

" I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all;

But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

"Ah," said a, friend, "I am at times miserable because I remember my sad sinfulness even since conversion." "Ah!" said Jack, "you have not begun to sing,--

'I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all.

But Jesus Christ is my all in all.'"

"Oh!" said the friend, "how do you get rid of your doubts and fears? My faith frequently fails, and I miss my sure hope in Christ. My frames are so variable and feelings so contrary, what do you think of that?" "Think," said poor Jack, " why master I have no good things to care about--

'I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all,

But Jesus Christ is my all in all.'"

Well, then, if there is any one here who is "a poor sinner, find nothing at all," -- where is he? in the gallery" or sitting down below? If he cannot say all that poor man said; if he can say the first line, he need not fear to say the second. Never mind if he can't say,--

Jesus Christ is my all in all."

If he can say,--

"I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all,"

he is most assuredly on the right road.

"Oh! but," says one, "I am sinful, vile, worthless." All right! you're "a Poor sinner and nothing at all," and Jesus Christ is willing to be your "all in all." "But I have blasphemed God, departed from his ways, and greviously transgressed." Well, I believe that, and a great deal more, and am very glad to hear it; for thus I see you are--

"A poor sinner, and nothing at all."

I am very glad if you will hold that opinion of yourself. "Ah! but I am afraid I brave sinned too much. When I try I cannot do anything. When I try to mend my ways; when I try to believe in Christ, I cannot." We are glad, very glad of it brother, that you are--

"A poor sinner, and nothing at all."

If you had a single particle of goodness; if you had a little bit not big enough to cover the top of your little finger, we should not be glad. But if thou art--

"A poor sinner, and nothing at all,

Jesus Christ is thy all in all."

Come! wilt thou have him? Thou art "nothing at all." Wilt thou have Christ? There he stands. Ask: it is all he wants, for thou art the object of his regard. There are only three steps. One is to step out of self, the second is to step upon Jesus, the third is to step into heaven. You have taken one step. I am sure you will take the others. God never makes you feel you are--

"A poor sinner, and nothing at all;"

but, sooner or later, he gives

"Jesus Christ as your all in all.'

O poor sinner, do not be doubtful of my Master's power. Do but touch the hem of his garment, and thou shalt be made whole. Like the poor woman in the crowd, do but get at it and touch it, and he will surely say unto thee, "Then art saved." If thou wilt go to him with this cry,--

I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all,

And Jesus Christ is my all in all,"

Then you will see the blessed reason why Jesus interceded thus; "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world."

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