

The Lord's Prayer

by Thomas Bradbury

The Lord's Prayer in John 17 is a model of unceasing intercession that demands the salvation, preservation, and glorification of Jesus' people, based on His perfect obedience and finished work.

Scripture: Isaiah 53:12

Topics: "Jesus Prayer", "Election Of Grace"

Description

Thomas Bradbury preaches on the deep mysteries of the everlasting covenant revealed in John 17, known as the 'Holy of holies of New Testament Scripture.' Jesus' prayer unveils the covenant desires and determinations existing in the mind of the Covenantee for the safe housing of the whole election of grace in glory. He intercedes for those given to Him, confirming their faith and hope, from joyful unbelievers to dead believers. Bradbury emphasizes the unceasing intercession patterned in this chapter, highlighting the unique prayer of Jesus grounded in His authority, obedience, and accomplished redemption.

Transcript

"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." (John 17:24)

This chapter may be well styled the Holy of holies of New Testament Scripture. It is the opening up of the deep mysteries of the everlasting covenant by the only Expounder and Interpreter thereof. It is a breathing into the ears of the Father of those covenant desires and determinations which existed, do exist, and will exist in the mind of the Covenantee until the whole election of grace is safely housed with Him in glory. It has been rightly called, "The Lord's Prayer," for such indeed it is.

In it we have a pattern or model of that unceasing intercession which goes up before the throne of God on the behalf of those whose characters are minutely described in the various portions of God's blessed Book. I love to look at things just as God the Spirit states them without any human gloss or garnishing. Now look at the description of the persons whom Jesus represents, prays for, and oftentimes visits with His love, confirming their little faith and encouraging their fainting hope.

Turn with me to that blessed winding up of the fifty-third chapter of the prophecies of Isaiah: "He made intercession for the transgressors." (Isa. 53:12) We, on whom a Divine necessity has been laid by the convicting power of God the Holy Ghost to see, mourn over and confess our manifold transgressions, bless and praise His holy Name for so precious a declaration as that. Oh, if it had said, according to the

fashionable evangelical religion of the day, He made intercession for believers: where should we be?

But we see light in God's light, and thank Him for such precious instances as those given in Luke 24:41, and John 11:25. Luke brings to our notice and acquaintance those who were joyful unbelievers, while the Lord Jesus Christ introduces us to the company of dead believers. Here are a few on resurrection ground blessed with such a display of Divine grace and love that they wonder, can it be possible for such transgressors to have any part or lot in so great a salvation, so glorious a covenant, so precious a Saviour?

There are others, like busy, bustling, unbelieving Martha, do not think I am throwing stones at Martha, for I believe there are many like her here this morning, to whom the words of Jesus are applicable, "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." (John 11:25) Mark that! Believing in Jesus, yet dead. Do you know what that means? You cannot discover a pulsation of Divine life in you; innumerable transgressions are a burden to you; your corruption and depravity distress you; your wretched surroundings perplex you; and a body of sin and of death so bears you down that you cannot command a single desire heavenward, homeward, Godward; yet, let any suggestion come derogatory to the character, sacrifice, or all-prevalent intercession of Jesus Christ, and, tell me, don't you feel your heart beating with life, your spirit stirred with indignation, and your whole feelings repellent to the accusations of Satan and the world against the glorious Person and perfect work of Emmanuel?

Let us now, in humble dependence upon the guidance and grace of God the ever-blessed Spirit, look at this chapter with its precious heart-breathings of our Lord Jesus Christ on the behalf of His people; and though it may be that I have mentioned before some of the truths which I shall repeat this morning, depend upon it, for me to do so is not grievous, but for you it is safe. Those who cannot bear a repetition of the glorious truths of God's Gospel, give lamentable evidence of their being in the cold and icy region of a barren profession. There may be a profession of sound and clear truth, and we find sometimes that truth is as cold as it is clear. I like the truth as a lady in the North said to me the other day, "It came warm from the heart, warming our poor hearts, and scorching all who hate it." Yes, it is a blessed lot to experience truth brought home warm to the heart; truth accompanied by faith, hope, and fear. Love shed abroad in the heart by the ever-blessed Spirit which begets love to Him in return, melting the heart and overflowing the eyes. Let us notice

The manner and nature of this prayer as expressed in the three first words "Father, I will."

The persons interested "That they also whom Thou hast given Me."

The desire of His heart for them "Be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory."

The ground upon which His desire or demand is based "For Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world."

I. The manner and nature of this prayer "Father, I will." Heard ye ever such a prayer as this? Do you find in the whole compass of Divine revelation another person pleading on the same ground of assurance, ay, of authority? As Toplady so sweetly sang:

"With cries and tears He offer'd up

His humble suit below;

But with authority He asks,

Enthroned in glory now."

With authority He demands the salvation, preservation, and glorification of His people. He has the sole right to do so a right conferred upon Him by the Father before the worlds were framed, a right with which He was invested when the Holy Ghost was poured upon Him without measure, a right also on the ground of accomplished redemption and perfected obedience. Now, if we turn over the pages of our Bibles, we shall notice a few of the prayers recorded of the most highly-favoured saints. In Gen. 18. we see the LORD approaches Abraham and Abraham draws near. What is his plea? "Behold, now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes." Look at the prayer of Nehemiah 1:6: "Let Thine ear now be attentive, and Thine eyes open, that Thou mayest hear the prayer of Thy servant, which I pray before Thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel Thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against Thee; both I and my father's house have sinned." We will now turn to the prayer of Daniel, as recorded in his ninth chapter. Surely if we can find one who had a right to stand before God on the ground of his moral rectitude and consistent walk before men, it is Daniel. But mark well his prayer: "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from Thy precepts and from Thy judgments. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against Thee." Look well at that peculiar plea in ver. 19: "O Lord, hear; O lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for Thine own sake, O my God: for Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name." Now the Lord Jesus does not say, "for Thine own sake;" but His request is grounded upon what He was with the Father before the world was. He does not say, "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive;" but, "Father, I will." That is the all-prevalent covenant command.

Now I would ask, How do we approach God? Well, if we adopt the language of the general confession of England's Church, our state will be thus expressed: "Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against Thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us." See! The language of every child of the living God in reference to the commands of God written upon tables of stone; ay, and also to the precepts, injunctions, and exhortations of the New Testament is, I have not kept one. We stand before God in our relationship to Adam the first as sinners in deed and in truth. Sinners by birth, sinners in thought, sinners in look, sinners in mind, sinners altogether. As dear old John Kershaw once told me, a Lancashire man said to him: "The finished work of Jesus that you have been preaching just suits me; finished sinners sorely need a finished salvation." Those who are finished by the convicting power of the Holy Ghost, who see themselves in their crookedness according to the straight edge of God's holy law, who know themselves as lighter than vanity as weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, whose confession is, not like the punctilious Pharisee who prays by the clock and sets apart his seven stations in the day; but as broken-hearted sinners beholding the sorrows and sufferings of Jesus, and seeing themselves in the light of His glorious perfections, "We have NOT." This experience is not after fleshly preparation, or when appearing in the assembly; but, as we walk by the way, as we sit in retirement, as we lay our weary heads upon our pillow, just when the Spirit of God graciously works in us, and at no other time.

But, is it not our mercy to know that in covenant One stood forth and said, "Lo, I come; in the volume of the Book it is written of Me; I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." (Ps. 40:7,8;

Heb. 10:7-10) Now mark well, He did His Father's will, He obeyed His Father's law! When? This was true even before He had an apparent existence in the flesh, in accordance with the chaste and hallowed language of the "Te Deum," in the Church service "When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man, Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb;" it was true when He hung upon His virgin mother's breast; ay, it was true from His first appearance in Bethlehem's lowly manger to His last sigh on Calvary's bloody tree. Then and there He appeared in perfect identification with ourselves, and in Him we have a perfect righteousness, a perfect obedience to God's law and will, no swerving from the mind, purpose, and pleasure of His Father. He could look up, and with the confidence of an ever-obedient Son, say, "I do always those things that please him." (John 8:29) "ALWAYS!" No confession of sin from His sacred lips! No acknowledgment of failure from His exercised and troubled heart! Oh, no. But with sweet assurance He looks His Father in the face, and throughout this blessed seventeenth of John, says, "I have." What? I have fulfilled every covenant engagement with Thee, to which Thy blessed Spirit is witness in the heart of each child of Thine, up to this moment of time. Not one covenant blessing committed to My trust before the worlds were framed has been lacking in the experience of the weakest lamb in the flock, or of the feeblest child in the family. "I have." Precious declaration! There is that fullness in the short expressions of God's most Holy Word, which yields and consolation to the hearts of God's poor children when applied by the Holy Ghost. Look at the terms of the covenant of grace given in Jer. 31:33,34, and quoted by Paul in 2 Cor. 6:16, "I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Look again at Heb. 8:10; 10:16. No ifs, buts, or peradventures here. No doubts, fears, or unbelief experienced when God's sovereign will is revealed and made into a gracious shall in our poor hearts. We glory in His covenant shalls and wills; but here we have fresh revelations of Jehovah's covenant faithfulness; for as the righteous Servant, the faithful Steward renders an account of His service, He says at every point, "I have." No failure in the glorious work of Jesus. No imperfection in His obedience, no flaw in the satisfaction he gave to outraged justice, no defect in His intercession, no misadventure in the conveyance of any blessing which the Father had treasured up in Him for His people. Let us notice how the God-Man Mediator repeats these precious "I haves."

Fourth verse: "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." My dear friends, I speak advisably when I say, were you to go into a thousand places of worship this morning, I will be bound to say, in the presence of Him with whom we have to do, that if you ask preacher and people for what purpose did the Lord Jesus Christ come into the world, the answer would invariably be, To save sinners. There is truth in that, but it is not the truth.

See! He came into the world to do that which Adam did not, that which I by nature neither could nor would do. He came to glorify His Father, and in the glorification of the Father the everlasting salvation of His people was secured. It is blessed to know that in Him Jehovah's attributes sustained no loss, covenant determinations know no miscarriage, and not one decree bears upon it an appearance of imperfection. All these gloriously upheld by our only Mediator and Advocate, according to Psalm 85:10,11: "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven." All this in the person and work of Jesus. Holiness maintained! Justice satisfied! Truth vindicated! And see! Mercy flowing, life bestowed, and love communicated in sweetest harmony with all those attributes which appeared dead set against the salvation of the children of the living God. "I have glorified Thee on the earth." Father, I have kept every command, and every precept of Thy most holy law.

Father, Thou didst look into this heart of Mine when Satan tempted Me, when the world derided Me, when Judas betrayed Me, when Peter denied Me, when all forsook Me; but Father, didst Thou see failure in My obedience to Thy sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," or Thou shalt not be angry with Thy brother?" The Father answers, No! When I was charged with being the associate of adulterers and adulteresses, didst Thou see any breach of the seventh? The Father answers, No! When Satan showed Me all the kingdoms of the world, and said, "All these will I give Thee," didst Thou see a breach of Thy tenth command, "Thou shalt not covet?"

The Father answers, No! God was glorified in the justifying obedience and sufferings of Jesus; and with the full consciousness of this He says, "I have glorified Thee on the earth." "On the earth" which is cursed for man's sake. Think about that! Turn to Gen. 3:14-17, we find the serpent cursed, the ground cursed, but no curse pronounced upon man. Every child of God who is brought to enjoy his position of blessing in heavenly places in Christ, knows well, that, whether in the midst of nature's beauties, or in those spots which the hand of man has marred, disappointment, decay, and death, are written upon the whole.

"On the earth," the scene of man's sin, and folly, and shame, God is glorified in the person of a real Man, and all elect ones shall be glorified in Him. "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." Obedience finished! Sufferings finished! Salvation finished for finished sinners! Christ does not say, I have attempted something, or I have done something whereby men may be saved if they will; Oh, no! But, I have saved them in glorifying Thee. They are eternally saved on the ground of what I have done and suffered. Precious truth! God is just and the Justifier of every believing soul in union with Him. He is a just God and a Saviour.

Sixth verse: "I have manifested Thy Name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world." Go through the Old Testament and you will find a variety of names describing God according to the wants and necessities of His own children. He appears to Abraham as, "I the Almighty God." (Gen. 17:1) What does that mean? A God with an arm all power, and a bosom all love. A wonderful Name! A full-breasted God! "His love is as great as His power," and all those for whom He gave Himself as their Portion must come into the possession of the same. "God Almighty!" The Omnipotent, full-breasted God of many paps. Here we see the breasts of Divine consolation which His children love to suck, and from which they draw sweet nourishment and refreshment. He is also described as JEHOVAH-JIREH, The LORD will provide. In this precious title: He whispers to His tried and tempted ones, I will see to all thy necessities, leave them with Me. "Stand still;" (Exod. 14:13) "Sit still;" (Isa. 30:7) "Be still." (Ps. 46:10) This reminds me of hearing of the poor old woman who, when laid aside and nearing her journey's end, with scarcely a creature comfort in the world, on being asked how she did, replied, "The Lord has graciously laid me aside from doing, but He comes and whispers so sweetly in my ears, 'Betty, lie still and cough.'" This is an example of suffering affliction, patient resignation, and firm reliance upon God, which may well make many of us ashamed of ourselves. He is also JEHOVAH-ROPHI. The Healer of all His people's diseases. Do foes abound on every hand? He is JEHOVAH-NISSI, the Banner, Shelter, and Security, of all His elect and ransomed host. Does the conflict thicken? He is JEHOVAH-SHALOM, The LORD send peace. Do transgressions and iniquities prevail against us? He is JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU, The LORD our Righteousness. But in the New Testament He is revealed in His new covenant character and name, Father. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, His First Elect, and the Father of all His elect brethren. Jesus identified with His brethren in their flesh, suffered, bled, died, rose again, and entered heaven's highest glory for them. From thence He sends down the Holy Ghost into the hearts of all the members of His mystical body, convincing them of sin, and blessing them with the assurance that they are born of God, and crying in them and for them,

Abba, Father. Each, "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Pet. 1:23) Each desiring as new-born babes the sincere milk of the Word. Each brought into communication, communion and conversation with the Brother beloved who reveals the blessedness of Divine relationship. See how He speaks to Mary after His resurrection: "Go to My brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and our Father; and to My God, and your God." (John 20:17)

"My God, my Father! Blissful name!

O may I call Thee mine?

May I with sweet assurance claim

A portion so Divine?"

Eighth verse: "For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me." "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life;" (John 6:68) ay, and the words of prayer and supplication; for if we are found at the throne of the heavenly grace, it will be with the words which the Spirit indites and inspires in our exercised hearts; words which flow into our souls with melting and humbling power from the grace-filled lips of the great King-Priest. What is prayer? Parks, of Openshaw, was right when he said, and my heart danced with joy as I heard the never-to-be-forgotten words "Prayer is simply asking God for that which He in His purpose before time designed to give, and into possession of which His children come by the power of the Holy Ghost." Such is prayer, and all the rest is polluted breath and fleshly prating. O how precious for me to know that those words which flowed from my troubled heart and fell from my faltering lips this morning with some little sweetness were given by the Father to the Covenantee for me before all worlds! Can we believe it? Yes, we can when He works in us by the power of His Spirit, and causes us to sing His praises in those sweet hymns which are made a source of comfort to our hearts.

Twelfth verse: "Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept." Precious Keeper! Here we have the eternal preservation and security of every elect vessel of mercy "I have kept."

"What from Christ that soul shall sever,

Bound by everlasting bands?

Once in Him, in Him for ever,

Thus th' eternal covenant stands;

None shall pluck thee

From the Strength of Israel's hands."

Fourteenth verse: "I have given them Thy Word." In ver. 8, He says, "I have given unto them the words." Why this difference? Because in the verse before us we have Jesus as much as saying, "I give Myself for them and to them." Jesus Himself, the Eternal Word, (John 1:1) the Covenant Word (Hag. 2:5) the Creating Word, (Ps. 33:6) the Incarnate Word, (John 1:14) the Communing Word. (Luke 24:32) What a mercy to know that I have everything I need in Jesus! What do I need? My heart is so cold sometimes; but let Him speak to me and in me by His blessed Spirit, and my heart burns with love. I want freedom in prayer and supplication. Listen! There is One who, when thou canst not pray, is praying for thee! He is JEHOVAH-JESUS, thy Word to the Father up yonder! JEHOVAH-JESUS, the Word of JEHOVAH the

Father to thee down here by the witness and indwelling of JEHOVAH the Spirit. "I have given them Thy Word and the world hath hated them." The world cannot do anything else; you may try to stroke the world down as much as you like, but if the Word appears in you the world's hatred with Satan's malignity will be manifest against you.

Twenty-second verse: "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them." The glory of His grace, salvation, righteousness, and intercession. What a glorious salvation! The Father of glory planned it, the King of glory executed it, and the Spirit of glory applies it. The Father gives the light of the knowledge of His glory in the person of Jesus Christ, which is the earnest of an eternal weight of glory which awaits the elect and pilgrim people of God. We now notice,

II. The persons interested "Those whom Thou hast given Me." You will find this expression occurring six times in this chapter. In ver. 2, "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him." Let me caution you as to ver. 3, which is almost invariably misquoted. Many say, "This is life eternal to know Thee;" but Jesus did not say so. Mark His words: "And this is life eternal that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." Who are the persons who possess eternal life in the knowledge of God and of His Son Jesus Christ? "As many as Thou hast given Me," is the answer of the God-Man. This is distinguishing grace! Discriminating mercy! Now look at ver. 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." Go on to ver. 9: "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me, for they are Thine." Look at ver. 11: "Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as we are." Then we come to the words of the text: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." Here we have a peculiar people described; given to Christ, living in Christ, taught by Christ, preserved in Christ, with Christ! Now notice the blessed evidence given by Him to each of the given ones in John 6:37. "All," a wonderful word, big with Divine meaning. "All," this word is neither masculine nor feminine, but neuter. "All the persons, blessings, words promises, glory, and dominion. Yes, all the persons by power, all the words in prayer and praise, all the promises in pleas and petitions, all the glory and dominion from adoring hearts. "Shall come." Have we come? "To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed of men, but chosen of God and precious." (1 Pet. 2:4) "But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels." (Heb. 12:22) How did we come? See! "They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them." (Jer. 31:9) "They shall come" broken-hearted, and the good Physician shall heal them. "They shall come" with nothing to pay," and He will frankly forgive them. "They shall come," and His gracious promise is, "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." Such a glorious Gospel as this makes the elect, redeemed, and regenerate people of God shout aloud for joy, and bless His Name. We are now brought to consider,

III. The desire of Jesus' heart for His given ones "That they may be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me." "With Me!" Out of the world? No! For He prays, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world." (ver. 15) He declares, "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." (ver. 18) With Me in testimony. With Me in rejection. "With Me in all My temptations." With Me in the midst of a worshipping and adoring people. Is it not the longing and desire of every Spirit-quickened sinner to be where there is a precious testimony of God's love and care, a full-weight Gospel? No keeping back a part; but communicating that which a loving Father gives. And what He gives them that they gather. (Ps. 104:28)

"With Me where I am." Turn to John 14:2,3: "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." What a kind, compassionate, and considerate Saviour is this Jesus of ours! Are there any here who are mourning His absence? This is a sweet promise: "I will come again and receive you unto Myself." He will come again to take all His loved and redeemed ones to His glory-home. He has gone on before to take possession of His people's eternal and uninterrupted joy. He has gone to appear as the first-fruits of a glorious harvest; and as sure as He is gone, so shall each sheaf and each corn of wheat be presented before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. "That they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me." Oh, what a mercy to know that He is now before the throne of the Father for me, and that the Father is looking upon Him with infinite delight and ineffable joy, a joy which I cannot even attempt to express! And just think, shall we share the same joy? One with Him we must behold His glory, look upon that face which was once marred as no man's, see those hands and feet which were pierced with our own sins, gaze upon that sacred brow once lacerated by the cruel crown of thorns, and behold the riven side into which the soldier's spear was thrust on our account, from whence came forth blood and water, speaking the fulfillment of the prophecy, "Reproach hath broken My heart." (Ps. 69:20)

"That they may behold My glory." He has an uncreated, underived, incommunicable glory, the knowledge of which is too high for finite minds to grasp or comprehend. But the glory which the Father gave Him as the Mediator of the covenant is the same which He displayed now and again during His humiliation and suffering here below. I do not believe for a moment that which some assert: He laid aside His glory. He did no such thing! He veiled His glory with His humanity. He brought it into the world with Him; "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell." (Col. 1:9) See! "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." (John 1:14) Read John 2:11: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory." Read again Luke 5:8; when Peter obtained a view of His glory he was overwhelmed, and said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Go to John 18:4-6: "Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I AM. As soon then as He had said unto them, I AM, they went backward, and fell to the ground." Why this? Because of the overwhelming manifestation of His glory. In His resurrection, and again in His ascension, His glory was displayed. We cannot forget how the favoured three upon Tabor fell asleep under its effulgence and power. (Luke 9:32) It was a blessed privilege to me the other day to experience something of this in writing to one whom I love in Him; Ah, it is blessed to experience a little of the communion of saints through the pen and through the post. At that moment the eyes of my understanding saw Deity wrapt in humanity! Divine sympathy flowing from a real human heart, and melting mine with love. "But we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. 3:18) It is thus we behold His glory and are partakers of it. (1 Pet. 5:1) Even in the throes and throbs of dissolution, when poor nature is shaken and shattered, it is experienced; and that is painfully and pleasantly true,

"A mortal paleness on the cheek,

But glory in the soul."

The glory of the eternal Three revealed through the one Mediator, and experienced in the heart of God's children. "That they may be with Me." "And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in

them." (ver. 10) Christ's property by donation and redemption. How blessed to feelingly understand these precious truths! Jesus will look after His own. I see a faint illustration of this in the care taken of their dogs by many of the colliers in the North. It is with them, "Touch my dog touch me!" Zechariah sweetly expresses our Lord's care and concern over His people, "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye;" (Zech. 2:8) or, as one has well expressed, "When the foot is trodden upon on earth the HEAD cries out in heaven." He enters into every circumstance of His down-trodden ones in the vale of sorrow, and demands that they be with Him on the mount of eternal joy.

IV. The ground upon which His demand is based "For Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." Job cried, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him! That I might come even to His seat. I would order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments." (Job 23:3,4) Jesus has a Divine and irresistible argument here, "Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." Thou didst love Me as Thine own Son as the Head of My body, as the Husband of My bride, and as the Keeper of My flock; therefore, "I will that they be with Me and behold my glory." David's love to Jonathan was wonderful, passing the love of women. A mother's love is marvellous, but it may fail, and she may forget. (Isa. 49:15)

"'Twas with an everlasting love,

That God His own elect embraced,

Before He built the worlds above,

Or earth on her huge columns placed."

And cannot we join with Kelly in that verse?

"Zion's Friend in nothing alters.

Though all others may, and do;

His is love that never falters,

Always to its object true.

Happy Zion!

Crowned with mercies ever new."

Blessed be God! His love in Christ Jesus to His own is uninterrupted, unshaken, immutable! Precious Jesus, give us the sweet experience of Thy love and glory, and to know something of Thy gracious commanding prayer, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." Amen.

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