**BROOKS BY THE TRAVELLER'S WAY - ADDRESSES BY JOHN H. JOWETT**

**19. SAVING THE WORLD by JOHN H. JOWETT**

*"God so loved the world."*

*John 3:16*

*"I pray not for the world."*

*John 17:9*

"God so loved the world." "I pray not for the world." We are confronted by an apparent antagonism. The two dispositions appear to be contradictory. "God so loved the world." The evangel suggests an all-affectionate inclusiveness. "I pray not for the world." The supplication suggests a partial and severe exclusion. The one describes a circle which embraces a race; "God so loved the world." The other defines a sphere of benediction which comprehends an elected few; "I pray not for the world." It is well to feel the strain of the apparent antagonism in order that we may enter into the peace of the fundamental consistency.

Now, let us begin here. The Christianised instinct revolts against a spiritual exclusiveness. The culture of the Christian religion is in the direction of an ever-expanding comprehension. Growth in grace is growth in sympathetic inclusiveness. We may measure our growth by the size and quality of our fellowships. Measure the circumference of your love and you have got the amplitude of your Christian life. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour." That is the circle which defines the size of life lived in the days of the early covenant. "Thou shalt love thine enemy." Such is the incomparably larger circle defined for the privileged possessor of the new covenant in Christ our Lord. "Thou shalt love thine enemy." That is the stretched-out circle of affectionate fellowship enjoined by the Christian religion. It stretches out to include the outermost. There is no one beyond its pale. Within the scope of its far-reaching lines the whole family of man can find a home.

"Thou shalt love thine enemy." "I pray not for the world." Now the Master is never behind the disciple. In this warfare the great Commandant never lags in the rear of the common soldier. In Christ the ideal is realised, and all the law is fulfilled. "I pray not for the world." And yet I know the world is loved, and cared for, and is never absent from His yearning and solicitous regard. "I pray not for the world," and yet it was the world that was never out of His sight. "I pray not for the world," and yet the world was the desert which He yearned to grace and adorn with glories from the paradise of heaven. "I pray not for the world," and yet the world projected itself into His prayers as the goal and bourne of ultimate benediction. Range through the course of this prayer, and see how the salvation of the world emerges as the yearned-for product of all His saving ministry. "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." Do you mark the dazzling peak of the shining gradient? "I pray not for the world." I pray for them, that they may be one ... that the world may believe." The apparent exclusion is only a loving design for an ultimate benediction. See how the wealthy purpose again emerges in the subsequent reaches of the prayer. "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." Mark again, how the whole thought and purpose rises to a consummation in the illumination and salvation of the world. "That the world may know!" The whole world is the object of saving benediction, but of benediction through the means and ministry of a chosen few. "I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me": but for them, in order that the world, through them, may be blessed and saved.

**1.** Now, this is the vital doctrine of election, the election of some for the benediction of the whole. "I pray for these that the world may believe." The elect are not called to a sphere of exclusion, but to a function of transmission. They are not elected to privilege, but to service, not to the secret hoarding of blessing, but to its widespread distribution. The elect are not circles, but centres, heat centres for radiating gracious influence to remote circumferences, that under its warming and softening ministry "the world may believe" in the Son of God. That is the way of the Master. He will work upon the frozen streams and rivers of the world by raising the general temperature. He seeks to increase the fervour of those who are His own, and, through the pure and intense flame of their zeal, to create an atmosphere in which the hard frozen indifference of the world shall be melted into wonder, into tender inquisition, that on the cold altar of the heart may be kindled the fire of spiritual devotion. "I pray not for the world, but for these" ... "that the world may believe." Through the disciple He seeks the vagrant; through the believer He seeks the unbeliever; through the Church He seeks the world; through the ministry of Christian men and women the world is to be won for Christ.

**2.** Now in this great prayer there are one or two clear glimpses of certain convictions which will have to be created before the world can be constrained to turn to Christ. "That the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." We have to get that conviction deeply and ineradicably embedded into the mind and heart of the world. And here is another collateral conviction, "That the world may know that Thou hast loved them." The believers are to make that fact shine like the noontide, that the world can no more evade it than it can evade the obtrusive glory of the meridian sun. Somehow or other the disciples of Christ are to drive this twofold persuasion into the heart of the world:--

**(1)** That Christ was really sent, that what He said was true, that He is grandly dependable; and

**(2)** That we are loved by Him, and that the Christ life is the life of blessedness. "That the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me"; the dependableness of Christ. "That the world may know that Thou hast loved them"; the blessedness of His disciples. Whatever else the world may do or not do, whatever may be the nature and extent of its revolt, if men will deliberately steer their lives into perdition and hell, we believers in Christ are to see to it that they do it with their eyes open, and with these two convictions sounding through their souls like a great bell, the Lord is dependable, and the life of His disciples is blessed.

How are we to do it? I gather the answer from the prayer of our Lord. These convictions are to be driven home to the world by the force and impetus of redeemed character. See the march and ascension of the wonderful prayer. "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." And a little later the light breaks upon the primary purpose--"that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." "Kept from the evil ... that the world may believe." The unworldliness of the believer is to make the world believe in the dependableness of the Lord. Our moral elevation is to be the initial ministry in the world's salvation. By our elevation we are to create a profound conviction that it is possible to resist the gravitation of the world. The strength of our resistance is to placard before the world the might and dependableness of our God. We are to manifest pure aspiration amid defiling ambition. We are to reveal refined tastes amid appetites that are coarse and defiled. By the strenuousness of Godly living we are to drive the conviction into the souls of men that we are in solemn league and covenant with a mighty God. "Kept from the evil ... that the world may believe."

Listen again to the Master in prayer--"that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and Thou in Me ... that the world may know that Thou hast loved them." Do you see the creative force of the second of these convictions? We are to make the world believe that the Lord loves us by the loveliness of our fellowships. "That they may be one ... that the world may know." Our oneness, the absence of division and strife, the beauty of our communion, the lovely vision of exquisite family kinship, is to convince the world that the love of God has been engaged in so fair a creation. The winsome bloom that rests upon our relationships is to persuade the world that the life is heaven-born. We are to placard the love of God through the loveliness of our communion. "That they may be one ... that the world may believe."

Here, then, my brethren, is the setting of the divine purpose. Our Lord will work upon the world through us. Through our moral elevation and fine spiritual kinships He would compel the world into primary and fruitful beliefs. Let us place the matter before us in pertinent application. If the organised worldliness of this city is ever to be disturbed, if worldly men and women are to be startled into wonder and incipient belief, it will have to be done through the unworldliness and fine spiritual fellowships of professed disciples of Christ.

Are we ready for the Master's use? Do we really believe in the possibility of the world's redemption? How spacious is our belief; how large is the possibility which we entertain? When we survey the clamant needs of the race, do we discover any "hopeless cases"? Where have we obtained the right to use the word "hopeless"? What evidence or experience will justify us in saying of any man, "He is too far gone"? In what atmosphere of thought and expectancy are we living? Are we dwelling in the Book of Ecclesiastes, or making our home in the Gospel by John? Let us ransack the city. Let us rake out, if we can find him, the worst of our race. Let us produce the sin-steeped and the lust-soddened soul, and then let us hear the word of the Master. "Believest thou that I am able to do this"? The first condition of being capable ministers of Christ, is to believe in the possibility of the world's salvation. Let us become reverently familiar with the glorious evangel until the music of the Gospel rings through every part of our being. Let us ask Him to free us, not only from doubt, but from uncleanness. Let us plead with Him to make us the fitting instruments of His power, that through the beauty and strength of our life, and the steady persistence of our faith, the world may be allured into the fellowship of the saints in light.