

Eternal Life

Scripture Lesson: - St. John 17:1-10.

Text: - St. John 17:3.

Introduction: - This prayer of intercession was just before the arrest. The disciples and the master were alone. This prayer is in many respects the most precious relic of the past. We have here the words which Christ addressed to God in the critical hours of his life. Yes, it would be a revelation if we had the prayers of Christ from his boyhood to the present prayer. What a revelation it would be. Scientists say that when they have perfected the machine which can bring back to reality all the forces set in motion, then we will be able to hear again the prayers of Jesus. Yes it would be interesting to hear from the lips of Jesus the things he feared, what he prayed against, what he hopes for, the persons commended to the Father, His prayers for his mother; For the disciples, for Lazarus. But we here have a prayer which does at least bring us into a sacred presence.

I. He prays for Himself.

- a. Father, glorify thy Son; Why? "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do". There is no reason why he should stay longer on earth. His earthly career is about to be closed. He does not want a prolongation of life. He has found time in thirty three years to do all he can upon earth. It is character, not time, we need to do our work. To make a deep and lasting impression, it is not longer life, but a more intensive life. Jesus did not find Himself cramped, limited, or too soon hurried out of life. "He laid down his life". Few men even recognise the reality of life as part of an eternal order. Very few seriously and persistently aim at fitting their life as a solid part of the divine order.

II. "that they might know thee"

- a. By manifesting the Father he gave eternal life to those who accepted and believed His revelation. This power he had not on his own

account, but that he might give eternal life to men. For this is life eternal, Eternal life is not merely life indefinitely prolonged. It is a life under new conditions and fed from different sources. To know what Christ revealed, this is the birth to life eternal. To know that love and holiness are governing powers with which all things are carried forward to their end; to know what God is, that he is a Father that cannot leave us His children of earth behind, and pass on to greater works, but stoops to our littleness and delay, that he may carry us with Him, this is life eternal. This is it that subdues the human heart and cleanses it from all pride, selfseeking and lust, and that inclines it to bow before a holy and loving God, this is life eternal. This is eternal life, that turns it from brief joys and imperfect meanings of time and gives it a home in heaven. To as many as believed, to them gave he power to become the sons of God. To believe him and to accept him, the God whom he reveals, is to become a son of God and to enter into eternal life.

III. "And Jesus Christ," whom thou hast sent.

The world did not yet know all that Jesus had brought. In a few days the cross will claim him. But he is yet to go to Gethsemane to be arrested. He hears Peter's denial. He is brought before Pilate. He is condemned. Barabbas is released. Then he is crucified, after his rejection by the Jewish authorities. Why did he die? To give eternal life to all who will call on him. Yes, eternal life may be your possession this very minute. If you have Jesus, you have eternal life. Illustration from Bishop Bell's death.

Conclusion appeal.