

going to do with him.” But before Peter denied him, and before he was taken by the soldiers, he offered a brief, simple prayer to his Father. He had been talking with and exhorting his brethren, and showing them the necessity of living according to the faith that he had taught them, and he offered up this petition—“Father, make these my disciples one, as we are one: I in thou, thou in me, and I in them, that we may all be one; and I pray not for these only, but for all who believe on me through their testimony.” This is a simple prayer. Did he who offered it mean anything, or did he not? If he meant anything, what did he mean? How much did he mean, and how did he calculate his disciples to construe this short prayer in their lives, in their walk, faith and practice after he was taken from them? How far, how much and wherein did he want them to be one? Can any of you show to us exactly what he meant? If you say he meant that everyone who believed on him should be one in their belief, that is sectarianism. Take the mother Church—the “Holy Catholic Church”—and the prayer of its members is that all may be Catholics: “Father, I pray thee to make the people all holy Catholics.” This is the faith and prayer of the Catholics, and the meaning they give to the petition of Jesus. The same with the Calvinists; and when they present themselves before the throne of grace, the burden of their petition is—“I pray thee, Father, make these people one as we are one; influence them to leave the Catholic Church, to revolt and come out from that wicked mother, that wicked harlot, that wicked Church, and declare themselves believers in that pure and holy doctrine that God has decreed all things that take place.” Go to those who believe in the doctrine of

free will, which, you know, comprehends many of the so-called Christian societies of the world, and they come up with a double and twisted storm—“God Almighty, make them all Methodists! Yes, let’s all be Methodists. I pray thee, Father, to take away the veil from the minds of this people, that they may see it is free grace and free will! God be praised, let’s all be Methodists.” This is how the sectarians explain and define the meaning of that memorable prayer of the Savior that his followers might be one; and you will excuse me for my manner of illustrating it—I did this to illustrate facts just as they are.

Did Jesus mean this, or did he not? Had he any allusion whatever to one here on the right, and to another on the left, each crying—“Lo! here is Christ, and lo! there is Christ, He is not yonder?” And another one pointing this way, and another that way, and so on to every point of the compass? What does all this portray before the mind of the rational being, the philosopher, one who has the spirit of revelation, and who understands the words of life and has the keys of life to the people; and to all who believe in the revelations of the Lord Jesus in the latter days? Confusion upon confusion, discord, strife, animosity, vexation, perplexity, warring to the knife and slaying each other. Oh, the number of Christian wars there have been upon the face of the earth! We can very readily and truthfully say that true Christians—the members of the true Church of Christ on the earth—never take the sword unless to defend themselves.

Brethren and sisters, we want to understand what the Savior meant when he prayed that his disciples might be one. One in faith? Yes. One in doctrine? Yes. One in practice?