

Gethsemane

A Sermon

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“And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”—[Luke 22:44](#).

FEW HAD FELLOWSHIP with the sorrows of Gethsemane. The majority of the disciples were not there. They were not sufficiently advanced in grace to be admitted to behold the mysteries of “the agony.” Occupied with the Passover feast at their own houses, they represent the many who live upon the letter, but are mere babes and sucklings as to the spirit of the gospel. The walls of Gethsemane fitly typify that weakness in grace which effectually shuts in the deeper marvels of communion from the gaze of ordinary believers. To twelve, nay, to eleven only was the privilege given to enter Gethsemane and see this great sight. Out of the eleven, eight were left at some distance; they had fellowship, but not of that intimate sort to which the men greatly beloved are admitted. Only three highly favored ones, who had been with him on the mount of transfiguration, and had witnessed the life-giving miracle in the house of Jairus—only these three could approach the veil of his mysterious sorrow: within that veil even these must not intrude; a stone’s-cast distance must be left between. He must tread the wine-press alone, and of the people there must be none with him. Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, represent the few eminent, experienced, grace-taught saints, who may be written down as “Fathers;” these having done business on great waters, can in some degree, measure the huge Atlantic waves of their Redeemer’s passion; having been much alone with him, they can read his heart far better than those who merely see him amid the crowd. To some selected spirits it is given, for the good of others, and to strengthen them for some future, special, and tremendous conflict, to enter the inner circle and hear the pleadings of the suffering High priest; they have fellowship with him in his sufferings, and are made conformable unto his death. Yet I say, even these, the elect out of the elect, these choice and peculiar favourites among the king’s courtiers, even these cannot penetrate the secret places of the Savior’s woe, so as to comprehend all his agonies. “Thine unknown sufferings” is the remarkable expression of the Greek liturgy; for there is an inner chamber in his grief, shut out from human knowledge and fellowship. Was it not here that Christ was more than ever an “Unspeakable gift” to us? Is not Watts right when he sings—

“And all the unknown joys he gives,
Were bought with agonies unknown.”

Since it would not be possible for any believer, however experienced, to know for himself all that our Lord endured in the place of the olivepress, when he was crushed beneath the upper and the nether mill-stone of mental suffering and hellish malice, it is clearly far beyond the preacher's capacity to set it forth to you. Jesus himself must give you access to the wonders of Gethsemane: as for me, I can but invite you to enter the garden, bidding you put your shoes from off your feet, for the place whereon we stand is holy ground. I am neither Peter, nor James, nor John, but one who would fain like them drink of the Master's cup, and be baptized with his baptism. I have hitherto advanced only so far as yonder band of eight, but there I have listened to the deep groanings of the man of sorrows. Some of you, my venerable friends, may have learned far more than I; but you will not refuse to hear again the roarings of the many waters which strove to quench the love of the Great Husband of our souls.

Several matters will require our brief consideration. Come Holy Spirit, breathe light into our thoughts, life into our words.

I. Come hither and behold the SAVIOR'S UNUTTERABLE WOE.

The emotions of that dolorous night are expressed by several words in Scripture. John describes him as saying four days before his passion, "Now is my soul troubled," as he marked the gathering clouds he hardly knew where to turn himself, and cried out "What shall I say?" Matthew writes of him, "he began to be sorrowful and very heavy." Upon the word *ademonein* translated "very heavy," Goodwin remarks that there was a distraction in the Savior's agony since the root of the word signifies "separated from the people—men in distraction, being separated from mankind." What a thought, my brethren, that our blessed Lord should be driven to the very verge of distraction by the intensity of his anguish. Matthew represents the Savior himself as saying "My soul is *exceeding sorrowful*, even unto death." Here the word *Perilupos* means encompassed, encircled, overwhelmed with grief. "He was plunged head and ears in sorrow and had no breathing-hole," is the strong expression of Goodwin. Sin leaves no cranny for comfort to enter, and therefore the sin-bearer must be entirely immersed in woe. Clark records that he began to be *sore amazed*, and to be very heavy. In this case *thambeisthai*, with the prefix *ek*, shows extremity of amazement like that of Moses when he did exceedingly fear and quake. O blessed Savior, how can we bear to think of thee as a man astonished and alarmed! Yet was it even so when the terrors of God set themselves in array against thee. Luke uses the strong language of my text—"being in an agony." These expressions, each of them worthy to be the theme of a discourse, are quite sufficient to show that the grief of the Savior was of the most extraordinary character; well justifying the prophetic exclamation "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow which was done unto me." He stands before us peerless in misery. None are molested by the powers of evil as he was; as if the powers of hell had given commandment to their legions, "Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king himself."

Should we profess to understand all the sources of our Lord's agony, wisdom would rebuke us with the question "Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in search of the depths?" We cannot do more than look at the revealed causes of grief. It partly arose from the horror of his soul *when fully comprehending the meaning of sin*. Brethren, when you were first convinced of sin and saw it as a thing exceeding sinful, though your perception of its sinfulness was but faint compared with its real heinousness, yet horror took hold upon you. Do you remember those sleepless nights? Like the Psalmist, you said "My bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long, for day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer." Some of us can remember when our souls chose strangling rather than life; when if the shadows of death could have covered us from the wrath of God we would have been too glad to sleep in the grave that we might not make our bed in hell. Our blessed Lord saw sin in its natural blackness. He had a most distinct perception of its treasonable assault upon his God, its murderous hatred to himself, and its destructive influence upon mankind. Well might horror take hold upon him, for a sight of sin must be far more hideous than a sight of hell, which is but its offspring.

Another deep fountain of grief was found in the fact that Christ now *assumed more fully his official position with regard to sin*. He was now made *sin*. Hear the word! he, who knew no sin, was made *sin* for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. In that night the words of Isaiah were fulfilled—"The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Now he stood as the sin-bearer, the substitute accepted by Divine justice to bear that we might never bear the whole of wrath divine. At that hour heaven looked on him as standing in the sinner's stead, and treated as sinful man had richly deserved to be treated. Oh! dear friends, when the immaculate Lamb of God found himself in the place of the guilty, when he could not repudiate that place because he had voluntarily accepted it in order to save his chosen, what must his soul have felt, how must his perfect nature have been shocked at such close association with iniquity?

We believe that at this time, *our Lord had a very clear view of all the shame and suffering of his crucifixion*. The agony was but one of the first drops of the tremendous shower which discharged itself upon his head. He foresaw the speedy coming of the traitor-disciple, the seizure by the officers, the mock-trials before the Sanhedrim, and Pilate, and Herod, the scourging and buffeting, the crown of thorns, the shame, the spitting. All these rose up before his mind, and, as it is a general law of our nature that the foresight of trial is more grievous than trial itself, we can conceive how it was that he who answered not a word when in the midst of the conflict, could not restrain himself from strong crying and tears in the prospect of it. Beloved friends, if you can revive before your mind's eye the terrible incidents of his death the hounding through the streets of Jerusalem, the nailing to the cross, the fever, the

thirst, and, above all, forsaking of his God, you cannot marvel that he began to be very heavy, and was sore amazed.

But possibly a yet more fruitful tree of bitterness was this—that *now his Father began to withdraw his presence from him*. The shadow of that great eclipse began to fall upon his spirit when he knelt in that cold midnight amidst the olives of Gethsemane. The sensible comforts which had cheered his spirit were taken away; that blessed application of promises which Christ Jesus needed as a man, was removed, all that we understand by the term “consolations of God” were hidden from his eyes. He was left single-handed in his weakness to contend for the deliverance of man. The Lord stood by as if he were an indifferent spectator, or rather, as if he were an adversary, he wounded him “with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one.”

But in our judgment the fiercest heat of the Savior’s suffering in the garden lay in *the temptations of Satan*. That hour above any time in his life, even beyond the forty days’ conflict in the wilderness, was *the time of his temptation*. “This is your hour and the power of darkness.” Now could he emphatically say, “The prince of this world cometh.” This was his last hand-to-hand fight with all the hosts of hell, and here must he sweat great drops of blood before the victory can be achieved.

We have glanced at the fountains of the great deep which were broken up when the floods of grief deluged the Redeemer’s soul. Brethren, this one lesson ere we pass from the contemplation. “We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Let us reflect that no suffering can be unknown to him. We do but run with footmen—he had to contend with horsemen; we do but wade up to our ankles in shallow streams of sorrow—he had to buffet with the swellings of Jordan. He will never fail to succor his people when tempted; even as it was said of old, “In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them.”

II. Turn we next to contemplate THE TEMPTATION OF OUR LORD.

At the outset of his career, the serpent began to nibble at the heel of the promised deliverer; and now as the time approached when the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head, that old dragon made a desperate attempt upon his great destroyer. It is not possible for us to lift the veil where revelation has permitted it to fall, but we can form some faint idea of the suggestions with which Satan tempted our Lord. Let us, however, remark by way of caution, before we attempt to paint this picture, that whatever Satan may have suggested to our Lord, his perfect nature did not in any degree whatever submit to it so as to sin. The temptations were, doubtless, of the very foulest character, but they left no speck or flaw upon him, who remained still the fairest among ten thousand. The prince of this world came, but he had nothing in Christ. He struck the sparks, but they did not fall, as in

our case, upon dry tinder; they fell as into the sea, and were quenched at once. He hurled the fiery arrows, but they could not even scar the flesh of Christ; they smote upon the buckler of his perfectly righteous nature, and they fell off with their points broken, to the discomfiture of the adversary.

But what, think you, were these temptations? It strikes me, from some hints given, that they were somewhat as follows—there was, first, *a temptation to leave the work unfinished*; we may gather this from the prayer—“If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” “Son of God,” the tempter said, “is it so? Art thou really called to bear the sin of man? Hath God said, ‘I have laid help upon one that is mighty,’ and art thou he, the chosen of God, to bear all this load? Look at thy weakness! Thou sweatest, even now, great drops of blood; surely thou art not he whom the Father hath ordained to be mighty to save; or if thou be, what wilt thou win by it? What will it avail thee? Thou hast glory enough already. See what miscreants they are for whom thou art to offer up thyself a sacrifice. Thy best friends are asleep about thee when most thou needest their comfort; thy treasurer, Judas, is hastening to betray thee for the price of a common slave. The world for which thou sacrificest thyself will cast out thy name as evil, and thy Church, for which thou dost pay the ransom-price, what is it worth? A company of mortals! Thy divinity could create the like any moment it pleaseth thee; why needest thou, then, pour out thy soul unto death?” Such arguments would Satan use; the hellish craft of one who had then been thousands of years tempting men, would know how to invent all manner of mischief. He would pour the hottest coals of hell upon the Savior. It was in struggling with this temptation, among others, that, being in an agony, our Savior prayed more earnestly.

Scripture implies that our Lord was assailed by *the fear that his strength would not be sufficient*. He was heard in that he feared. How, then, was he heard? An angel was sent unto him strengthening him. His fear, then, was probably produced by a sense of weakness. I imagine that the foul fiend would whisper in his ear—“Thou! thou endure to be smitten of God and abhorred of men! Reproach hath broken thy heart already; how wilt thou bear to be publicly put to shame and driven without the city as an unclean thing? How wilt thou bear to see thy weeping kinsfolk and thy broken-hearted mother standing at the foot of thy cross? Thy tender and sensitive spirit will quail under it. As for thy body, it is already emaciated; thy long fastings have brought thee very low; thou wilt become a prey to death long ere thy work is done. Thou wilt surely fail. God hath forsaken thee. Now will they persecute and take thee; they will give up thy soul to the lion, and thy darling to the power of the dog.” Then would he picture all the sufferings of crucifixion, and say, “Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the day when the Lord shall deal with thee?” The temptation of Satan was not directed against the Godhead, but the manhood of Christ, and therefore the fiend would probably dwell upon the feebleness of man. “Didst thou not say thyself, ‘I am a worm and no man, the reproach of men and the despised of the people?’ How wilt

thou bear it when the wrath-clouds of God gather about thee? The tempest will surely shipwreck all thy hopes. It cannot be; thou canst not drink of this cup, nor be baptized with this baptism." In this manner, we think, was our Master tried. But see he yields not to it. Being in an agony, which word means in a wrest ring, he struggles with the tempter like Jacob with the angel. "Nay," saith he, "I will not be subdued by taunts of my weakness; I am strong in the strength of my Godhead, I will overcome thee yet." Yet was the temptation so awful, that, in order to master it, his mental depression caused him to "sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

Possibly, also, the temptation may have arisen from a suggestion *that he was utterly forsaken*. I do not know—there may be sterner trials than this, but surely this is *one* of the worst, to be utterly forsaken. "See," said Satan, as he hissed it out between his teeth—"see, thou hast a friend nowhere! Look up to heaven, thy Father hath shut up the bowels of his compassion against thee. Not an angel in thy Father's courts will stretch out his hand to help thee. Look thou yonder, not one of those spirits who honored thy birth will interfere to protect thy life. All heaven is false to thee; thou art left alone. And as for earth, do not all men thirst for thy blood? Will not the Jew be gratified to see thy flesh torn with nails, and will not the Roman gloat himself when thou, the King of the Jews, art fastened to the cross? Thou hast no friend among the nations; the high and mighty scoff at thee, and the poor thrust out their tongues in derision. Thou hadst not where to lay thy head when thou wast in thy best estate; thou hast no place now where shelter will be given thee. See the companions with whom thou hast taken sweet counsel, what are they worth? Son of Mary, see there thy brother James, see there thy loved disciple John, and thy bold Apostle Peter—they sleep, they sleep; and yonder eight, how the cowards sleep when thou art in thy sufferings! And where are the four hundred others? They have forgotten thee; they will be at their farms and their merchandize by morning. Lo! thou hast no friend left in heaven or earth. All hell is against thee. I have stirred up mine infernal den. I have sent my missives throughout all regions summoning every prince of darkness to set upon thee this night, and we will spare no arrows, we will use all our infernal might to overwhelm thee; and what wilt thou do, thou solitary one?" It may be, this was the temptation; I think it was, because the appearance of an angel unto him strengthening him removed that fear. He was heard in that he feared; he was no more alone, but heaven was with him. It may be that this is the reason of his coming three times to his disciples—as Hart puts it—

"Backwards and forwards thrice he ran
As if he sought some help from man."

He would see for himself whether it was really true that all men had forsaken him; he found them all asleep; but perhaps he gained some faint comfort from the thought that they were sleeping, not from treachery, but from sorrow, the spirit indeed was willing, but the flesh was weak.

We think Satan also assaulted our Lord with a bitter taunt indeed. You know in what guise the tempter can dress it, and how bitterly sarcastic he can make the insinuation—*“Ah! thou wilt not be able to achieve the redemption of thy people.* Thy grand benevolence will prove a mockery, and thy beloved ones will perish. Thou shalt not prevail to save them from my grasp. Thy scattered sheep shall surely be my prey. Son of David, I am a match for thee; thou canst not deliver out of my hand. Many of thy chosen have entered heaven on the strength of thine atonement, but I will drag them thence, and quench the stars of glory; I will thin the courts of heaven of the choristers of God, for thou wilt not fulfill thy suretyship; thou canst not do it. Thou art not able to bring up all this great people; they will perish yet. See, are not the sheep scattered now that the Shepherd is smitten? They will all forget thee. Thou wilt never see of the travail of thy soul. Thy desired end will never be reached. Thou wilt be for ever the man that began to build but was not able to finish.” Perhaps this is more truly the reason why Christ went three times to look at his disciples. You have seen a mother; she is very faint, weary with a heavy sickness, but she labors under a sore dread that her child will die. She has started from her couch, upon which disease had thrown her, to snatch a moment’s rest. She gazes anxiously upon her child. She marks the faintest sign of recovery. But she is sore sick herself, and cannot remain more than an instant from her own bed. She cannot sleep, she tosses painfully, for her thoughts wander; she rises to gaze again—“How art thou, my child, how art thou? Are those palpitations of thy heart less violent? Is thy pulse more gentle? “But, alas! she is faint, and she must go to her bed again, yet she can get no rest. She will return again and again to watch the loved one. So, methinks, Christ looked upon Peter, and James, and John, as much as to say, “No, they are not all lost yet; there are three left,” and, looking upon them as the type of all the Church, he seemed to say—“No, no; I will overcome; I will get the mastery; I will struggle even unto blood; I will pay the ransom-price, and deliver my darlings from their foe.”

Now these, methinks, were his temptations. If you can form a fuller idea of what they were than this, then right happy shall I be. With this one lesson I leave the point—*“Pray that ye enter not into temptation.”* This is Christ’s own expression; his own deduction from his trial. You have all read, dear friends, John Bunyan’s picture of Christian fighting, with Apollyon. That master-painter has sketched it to the very life. He says, though “this sore combat lasted for above half a day, even till Christian was almost quite spent, I never saw him all the while give so much as one pleasant look, till he perceived he had wounded Apollyon with his two-edged sword; then indeed, he did smile and look upward! But it was the dreadfulest sight I ever saw.” That is the meaning of that prayer, “Lead us not into temptation.” Oh you that go recklessly where you are tempted, you that pray for afflictions—and I have known some silly enough to do that—you that put yourselves where you tempt the devil to tempt you, take heed from the Master’s own example. He sweats great

drops of blood when he is tempted. Oh! pray God to spare you such trial. Pray this morning and every day, “Lead me not into temptation.”

III. Behold, dear brethren, THE BLOODY SWEAT.

We read, that “he sweat as it were great drops of blood.” Hence a few writers have supposed that the sweat was not actually blood, but had the appearance of it. That interpretation, however, has been rejected by most commentators, from Augustine downward, and it is generally held that the words “as it were” do not only set forth *likeness* to blood, but signify that it was actually and literally blood. We find the same idiom used in the text—“We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father.” Now, clearly, this does not mean that Christ was like the only-begotten of the Father, since he is really so. So that generally this expression of Holy Scripture sets forth, not a mere likeness to a thing, but the very thing itself. We believe, then, that Christ did really sweat blood. This phenomenon, though somewhat unusual, has been witnessed in other persons. There are several cases on record, some in the old medicine books of Galen, and others of more recent date, of persons who after long weakness, under fear of death have sweat blood. But this case is altogether one by itself for several reasons. If you will notice, he not only sweat blood, but it was in great drops; the blood coagulated, and formed large masses. I cannot better express what is meant than by the word “gouts”—big, heavy drops. This has not been seen in any case. Some slight effusions of blood have been known in cases of persons who were previously enfeebled, but great drops never. When it is said “falling to the ground”—it shows their copiousness, so that they not only stood upon the surface and were sucked up by his garments till he became like the red heifer which was slaughtered on that very spot, but the drops fell to the ground. Here he stands unrivalled. He was a man in good health, only about thirty years of age, and was laboring under no fear of death; but the mental pressure arising from his struggle with temptation, and the straining of all his strength, in order to baffle the temptation of Satan, so forced his frame to an unnatural excitement, that his pores sent forth great drops of blood which fell down to the ground. This proves how tremendous must have been the weight of sin when it was able so to crush the Savior that he distilled drops of blood! This proves too, my brethren, the mighty power of his love. It is a very pretty observation of old Isaac Ambrose that the gum which exudes from the tree without cutting is always the best. This precious camphire-tree yielded most sweet spices when it was wounded under the knotty whips, and when it was pierced by the nails on the cross; but see, it giveth forth its best spice when there is no whip, no nail, no wound. This sets forth the voluntariness of Christ’s sufferings, since without a lance the blood flowed freely. No need to put on the leech, or apply the knife; it flows spontaneously. No need for the rulers to cry “Spring up, O well;” of itself it flows in crimson torrents. Dearly beloved friends, if men suffer some frightful pain of mind—I am not acquainted with the medical matter—apparently the blood rushes to the heart. The cheeks are pale; a fainting fit comes on; the blood has gone inward, as if to nourish the inner

man while passing through its trial. But see our Savior in his agony; he is so utterly oblivious of self, that instead of his agony driving his blood to the heart to nourish himself, it drives it outward to bedew the earth. The agony of Christ, inasmuch as it pours him out upon the ground, pictures the fullness of the offering which he made for men.

Do you not perceive, my brethren, how intense must have been the wrestling through which he passed, and will you not hear its voice *to you?*—"Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." It has been the lot of some of us to have sore temptations—else we did not know how to teach others—so sore that in wrestling against them the cold, clammy sweat has stood upon our brow. The place will never be forgotten by me—a lonely spot; where, musing upon my God, an awful rush of blasphemy went over my soul, till I would have preferred death to the trial; and I fell on my knees there and then, for the agony was awful, while my hand was at my mouth to keep the blasphemies from being spoken. Once let Satan be permitted really to try you with a temptation to blasphemy, and you will never forget it, though you live till your hairs are blanched; or let him attack you with some lust, and though you hate and loathe the very thought of it, and would lose your right arm sooner than indulge in it, yet it will come, and hunt, and persecute, and torment you. Wrestle against it even unto sweat, my brethren, yea, even unto blood. None of you should say, "I could not help it; I was tempted." Resist till you sweat blood rather than sin. Do not say, "I was so pressed with it; and it so suited my natural temperament, that I could not help falling into it." Look at the great Apostle and High Priest of your profession, and sweat even to blood rather than yield to the great tempter of your souls. Pray that ye enter not into temptation, so that when ye enter into it ye may with confidence say, "Lord, I did not seek this, therefore help me through with it, for thy name's sake."

IV. I want you, in the fourth place, to notice THE SAVIOR'S PRAYER.

Dear friends, when we are tempted and desire to overcome, the best weapon is prayer. When you cannot use the sword and the shield, take to yourself the famous weapon of All-prayer. So your Savior did. Let us notice his prayer. *It was lonely prayer.* He withdrew even from his three best friends about a stone's cast. Believer, especially in temptation, be much in solitary prayer. As private prayer is the key to open heaven, so is it the key to shut the gates of hell. As it is a shield to prevent, so is it the sword with which to fight against temptation. Family-prayer, social prayer, prayer in the Church, will not suffice, these are very precious, but the best beaten spice will smoke in your censer in your private devotions, where no ear hears but God. Betake yourselves to solitude if you would overcome.

Mark, too, it was *humble prayer*. Luke says he knelt, but another evangelist says he fell on his face. What! does the King fall on his face? Where, then, must be thy place, thou humble servant of the great Master? Doth the Prince fall flat to the ground? Where, then, wilt thou lie? What dust and ashes shall cover thy head? What sackcloth shall gird thy loins? Humility gives us good foot-hold in prayer. There is no hope of any real prevalence with

God, who casteth down the proud, unless we abase ourselves that he may exalt us in due time.

Further, it was *filial prayer*. Matthew describes him as saying “O my Father,” and Mark puts it, “Abba, Father.” You will find this always a stronghold in the day of trial to plead your adoption. Hence that prayer, in which it is written, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,” begins with “Our Father which art in heaven.” Plead as a child. You have no rights as a subject; you have forfeited them by your treason, but nothing can forfeit a child’s right to a father’s protection. Be not then ashamed to say, “My Father, hear my cry.”

Again, observe that it was *persevering prayer*. He prayed three times, using the same words. Be not content until you prevail. Be as the importunate widow, whose continual coming earned what her first supplication could not win. Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.

Further, see how it glowed to a red-hot heat—it was *earnest prayer*. “He prayed more earnestly.” What groans were those which were uttered by Christ! What tears, which welled up from the deep fountains of his nature! Make earnest supplication if you would prevail against the adversary.

And last, it was *the prayer of resignation*. “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” Yield, and God yields. Let it be as God wills, and God will will it that it shall be for the best. Be thou perfectly content to leave the result of thy prayer in his hands, who knows when to give, and how to give, and what to give, and what to withhold. So pleading, earnestly, importunately, yet mingling with it humility and resignation, thou shalt yet prevail.

Dear friends, we must conclude, turn to the last point with this as a practical lesson—“*Rise and pray*.” When the disciples were lying down they slept; sitting was the posture that was congenial to sleep. Rise; shake yourselves; stand up in the name of God; rise and pray. And if you are in temptation, be you more than ever you were in your life before, instant, passionate, importunate with God that he would deliver you in the day of your conflict.

V. As time has failed us we close with the last point, which is, THE SAVIOR’S PREVALENCE.

The cloud has passed away. Christ has knelt, and the prayer is over. “But,” says one, “did Christ prevail in prayer?” Beloved, could we have any hope that he would prevail in heaven if he had not prevailed on earth? Should we not have had a suspicion that if his strong crying and tears had not been heard *then*, he would fail *now*? His prayers did speed, and therefore he is a good intercessor for us. “How was he heard?” The answer shall be given very briefly indeed. He was heard, I think, in three respects. The first gracious answer that was given him was, *that his mind was suddenly rendered calm*. What a difference there is between “My soul is exceeding sorrowful,”—his hurrying too and fro, his repetition of the prayer three times, the singular agitation that was upon him—what a contrast between

all these and his going forth to meet the traitor with “Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?” Like a troubled sea before, and now as calm as when he himself said, “Peace be still,” and the waves were quiet. You cannot know a profounder peace than that which reigned in the Savior when before Pilate he answered him not a word. He is calm to the last, as calm as though it were his day of triumph rather than his day of trouble. Now I think this was vouchsafed to him in answer to his prayer. He had sufferings perhaps more intense, but his mind was now quieted so as to meet them with greater deliberation. Like some men, who when they first hear the firing of the shots in a battle are all trepidation, but as the fight grows hotter and they are in greater danger, they are cool and collected; they are wounded, they are bleeding, they are dying; yet are they quiet as a summer’s eve; the first young flush of trouble is gone, and they can meet the foe with peace—so the Father heard the Savior’s cry, and breathed such a profound peace into his soul, that it was like a river, and his righteousness like the waves of the sea.

Next, we believe that he was answered *by God strengthening him through an angel*. How that was done we do not know. Probably it was by what the angel said, and equally likely is it that it was by what he did. The angel may have whispered the promises; pictured before his mind’s eye the glory of his success; sketched his resurrection; portrayed the scene when his angels would bring his chariots from on high to bear him to his throne; revived before him the recollection of the time of his advent, the prospect when he should reign from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth; and so have made him strong. Or, perhaps, by some unknown method God sent such power to our Christ, who had been like Samson with his locks shorn, that he suddenly received all the might and majestic energy that were needed for the terrific struggle. Then he walked out of the garden no more a worm and no man, but made strong with an invisible might that made him a match for all the armies that were round about him. A troop had overcome him, like Gad of old, but he overcame at last. Now he can dash through a troop; now he can leap over a wall. God has sent by his angel force from on high, and made the man Christ strong for battle and for victory.

And I think we may conclude with saying, that God heard him in granting him now, not simply strength, *but a real victory over Satan*. I do not know whether what Adam Clarke supposes is correct, that in the garden Christ did pay more of the price than he did even on the cross; but I am quite convinced that they are very foolish who get to such refinement that they think the atonement was made on the cross, and nowhere else at all. We believe that it was made in the garden as well as on the cross; and it strikes me that in the garden one part of Christ’s work was finished, wholly finished, and that was his conflict with Satan. I conceive that Christ had now rather to bear the absence of his Father’s presence and the revilings of the people and the sons of men, than the temptations of the devil. I do think that these were over when he rose from his knees in prayer, when he lifted himself from the

ground where he marked his visage in the clay in drops of blood. The temptation of Satan was then over, and he might have said concerning that part of the work—"It is finished; broken is the dragon's head; I have overcome him." Perhaps in those few hours that Christ spent in the garden the whole energy of the agents of iniquity was concentrated and dissipated. Perhaps in that one conflict all that craft could invent, all that malice could devise, all that infernal practice could suggest, was tried on Christ, the devil having his chain loosened for that purpose, having Christ given up to him, as Job was, that he might touch him in his bones and in his flesh, yea, touch him in his heart and his soul, and vex him in his spirit. It may be that every devil in hell and every fiend of the pit was summoned, each to vent his own spite and to pour their united energy and malice upon the head of Christ. And there he stood, and he could have said as he stood up to meet the next adversary—a devil in the form of man—Judas—"I come this day from Bozrah, with garments dyed red from Edom; I have trampled on my enemies, and overcome them once for all; now go I to bear man's sin and my Father's wrath, and to finish the work which he has given me to do." If this be so, Christ was then heard in that he feared; he feared the temptation of Satan, and he was delivered from it; he feared his own weakness, and he was strengthened; he feared his own trepidation of mind, and he was made calm.

What shall we say, then, in conclusion, but this lesson. Does it not say "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall have." Then if your temptations reach the most tremendous height and force, still lay hold of God in prayer and you shall prevail. Convinced sinner! that is a comfort for you. Troubled saint! that is a joy for you. To one and all of us is this lesson of this morning—"Pray that ye enter not into temptation." If in temptation let us ask that Christ may pray for us that our faith fail not, and when we have passed through the trouble let us try to strengthen our brethren, even as Christ has strengthened us this day."