

Gethsemane: The Fulfillment Of A Prophecy

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With the exception of Calvary no other event in our Lord's earthly life has appealed more fully to the sympathy and interest of believers than that midnight scene in Gethsemane's garden, where in loneliness and distress the Christ, on the evening of His betrayal, offered up His thrice-repeated prayer, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Interpretations of this prayer have not been lacking, most of them being more or less influenced by the dread tragedy of the Cross so soon to supervene, and they vary **** as the prayer is taken to be an expression of the Manhood or Godhead of the Lord, in regard to His now impending death; interpreting it as either the shrinking of His manhood from the physical suffering of the cross, or the recoil of His sinless purity from being made sin. All such interpretations presuppose a knowledge far more intimate and exact than I believe any man has of that wondrous personality — Christ Jesus. God manifest in the flesh must ever present many mysteries that are incapable of solution, save when and where the enshrouding veil is drawn aside and the vision made clear by revelation. Nowhere else in the Scriptures do we find any confirmation of the assumption that our Lord's physical or spiritual nature either faltered or failed under trial; but that, on the contrary, with fixed and unwavering determination He walked the path that led to Calvary, and for joy endured the cross, despising the shame. And that Gethsemane was no exception to this great characteristic of His life I think can be proved from revelation.

In seeking the meaning of the prayer it is necessary to

remember that all the personalities in the scene are either divine or spiritual beings, — the Lord Jesus, His Father to Whom He prays, Satan, and an Angel. We must therefore turn to Scripture for the understanding of their motives, and the interpretation of their actions and language; carefully refraining from explanations that are based chiefly or only on what we think they might or must mean. The time in our Lord's life when He prayed this prayer is important to bear in mind. It was upon the eve of the accomplishment of His life's work, the great reason for His incarnation, the redemption of Man. The Father to Whom He prays, had sent Him into the world, had made Him under the law, subject to all its enactments and requirements, that, these having been kept in every particular both of letter and spirit, He might satisfy, by the offering of Himself once for all, the justice of God, and provide a righteousness for sinful men through faith in Himself.

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