

THE GARDEN CONFLICT... the world's greatest battle
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(Luke 22:44)

The life of the Lord Jesus was a time of constant watchfulness against the wiles of Satan. One mistake would have been sufficient to wreck the entire plan of God's salvation; and both Christ and His enemy knew it. Through direct methods, when Jesus was promised the kingdoms of the world; and through indirect methods, when the Spite and bitterness of men endeavoured to irritate and annoy Him, Satan continually tried to overcome the Son of God. "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). And the nearer Christ went to His cross and victory, the more desperate became the enemy. It would appear that Satan finally abandoned any attempt to make Christ fall into Sill. realizing that in this matter the Lord Jesus was invincible. There remained but one possibility. The garden of Gethsemane became the scene of the world's greatest conflict, when Satan tried to kill the Saviour before the triumph of the cross could be won.

The Great Conflict. How Great Christ's Subservience to the Will of God

"And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." There is reason to believe that this was Christ's greatest prayer. The writer to the Hebrews adds a few poignant details: "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared" (Heb. 5 :7). Obviously Christ dreaded death; but that could not have been the death of the cross. Calvary, and what lay beyond, brought great joy to the Lord's heart, for we read in Hebrews 12 :2, ". . . who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." The death dreaded by the Saviour was the premature death planned by the evil one. If Jesus had died in the garden of Gethsemane, the triumph of the cross would have been unknown. Therefore Satan directed against the physical resistance of the Lord Jesus every power at his command. In His moments of agonizing strain and weakness the Lord realized His need, and "the strong crying and tears" brought instant relief.

The Great Cry. How Great Christ's Supplication to the Heart of God

Language is inadequate to describe the spiritual stature of the Lord when, in spite of His intense longing to reach Calvary, He cried, "Not my will, but thine, be done." Yet it was the will of God to save Him, for the mind of the Son was in perfect alignment with the mind of the Father. Prayer was not a new exercise to the Lord Jesus. Day after day He had communed with God; yet these prayers in Gethsemane were unique. "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." It would appear that this was a desperate cry for assistance. His life blood was being shed too soon. The appeal reached the heart of God, and the prayer was answered.

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"And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven,
strengthening him" (Luke 22 : 43). This is probably the
Bible's greatest portrait of prayer. If only the followers
of Christ would emulate their Master's example, revival
would begin immediately.

The Great Conquest. How Great Christ's Succour
Through the Help of God

True prayer is always answered; but if we ask according
to the will of God, the answer is always in the affirmative.
The coming of the angel provided Christ with the much
needed strength which enabled Him to overcome the fierce
assault of Satan, and ultimately to proceed triumphantly
to His cross. Satan's last great attempt to frustrate the
purposes of God in Christ failed completely. Exultantly
Paul was able to write, "And having spoiled principalities
and powers, he made a show over them openly, triumphing
over them in it" (Col. 2:15). The foundation of Calvary's
victory was laid in the prayers of Gethsemane. And in
this remarkable fashion God would teach us that life's
greatest achievements are only made possible as we seek
the place of prayer. A man is never so great as when he
kneels before his Maker.

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