

The Garden of Gethsemane.

Our scripture reading consists of Mark 14. 32-43:

And they came to a place named Gethsemane. And He said to His disciples, 'Sit here while I pray'.

And he took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly amazed and deeply troubled. And He said to them, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even to the point of death. Remain here and watch'.

And going forward a little, He fell on the ground; and He prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He said, 'Abba, Father, all things are possible to you. Take away this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will'.

And He came and found them sleeping. And He said to Peter, 'Simon, do you sleep? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak'. And again He went away, and prayed, saying the same words.

And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer Him.

And He came the third time and said to them, 'Do you still sleep and rest? It is enough; the hour has come. Behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go; behold, the one who betrays me is at hand'.

And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas¹ came, one of the twelve, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

A. Introductory comments.

The Garden of Gethsemane was the first of four 'places' which featured prominently during Passion Week and Easter Sunday:

(i) The place Gethsemane ... His agony

Mark 14. 32

'And they came to **a place** named Gethsemane'.

(ii) The place Gabbatha ... His trial

John 19. 13

'Pilate brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment-seat at **a place** called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha'.

(iii) The place Golgotha ... His suffering

John 19. 17

'Jesus went out, bearing His cross, to **the place** called 'The Place of a Skull', which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha'.

(iv) The place of burial ... His resurrection

Matthew 28. 6

'He is not here, for He is risen, as He said. Come, see **the place** where the Lord lay'.

For me, the chief value and importance of our Lord's experience in the Garden lies in the light it casts upon the depth of suffering He was to endure the next day at the place we call Golgotha.

It is right that we speak of the cross as a place of glorious triumph, for so it was. It is right that we draw attention to the Victor's loud cry from the tree, 'It is finished' ('It is completed', 'It is accomplished').² It is right that we acclaim and pay tribute to the mighty Christ who, by Himself, forever purged our sins there.³

But this is only half the story. And there is a very real danger that, in concentrating exclusively on this aspect of the cross, we fail to do justice to the stupendous cost to our Lord Jesus of going to that cross.

Of course, we shall never sound the depths of what He endured there. But, for me, Gethsemane provides something of a window through which I can view the cross, helping me better assess some small part of the price He was called on to pay ... some small part of the horror and awfulness of Jesus' 'hour', when He drank to its last dregs the cup of suffering which the Father gave Him.⁴

The Gospel narratives of our Lord's crucifixion themselves are very restrained and provide us with few actual details, even of the physical sufferings which He endured, still less of the spiritual, soul suffering which was His. As I see it, His ordeal of suffering and deep anguish then – the burden and load which He bore – is measured rather by what we witness in Gethsemane, when the cross cast its dark and ominous shadow over His soul.

Mull over words which Justin Martyr wrote back in the mid-Second Century:

'In the memoirs which I say were drawn up by His apostles and those who followed them, [it is recorded] that His sweat fell down like drops of blood while He was praying, and saying, 'If it be possible, let this cup pass'. His heart and also His bones were trembling; His heart being like wax melting in His belly: in order that we may perceive that the Father wished His Son really to undergo such sufferings for our sakes, and *may not say that He, being the Son of God, did not feel what was happening to Him and inflicted on Him*'.⁵

It is with these thoughts in mind that we reverently enter the Garden.

Chapter 18 of John's Gospel begins by telling us that Jesus 'went out with His disciples over the brook Kidron, where was a garden, into which He entered, He and His disciples'.⁶ Seemingly, this particular orchard-garden was distinguished by the presence of an oil press (where olives, harvested on the Mount of Olives, were crushed); hence its name, 'Gethsemane', signifying, 'place of the olive press'.

The journey involved Jesus and His disciples in a descent of about 100 feet down into a steep ravine, from where they then ascended the west slope of the Mount of Olives some half a mile from the city wall of Jerusalem. Having crossed the Kidron, they reached the orchard-garden called Gethsemane.

On account of severe space restrictions, gardens and orchards were almost unknown in the centre of Jerusalem itself. But many of its wealthier citizens owned private plots on the outskirts of the city, including here, on the slopes of the Mount of Olives.

I take it that some friend and sympathiser (possibly one of the wider circle of our Lord's disciples) had placed his olive grove at the Lord's disposal during His regular visits to Jerusalem. John tells us that 'Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place, because Jesus *often* met there with His disciples'.⁷ This then was their regular rendezvous when in Jerusalem. In his account, Luke confirms for us that, when in Jerusalem, it was the Saviour's 'custom' to go 'to the Mount of Olives'.⁸

Our Lord was, therefore, no stranger to 'the place of the olive press'.

Those gnarled and twisted olive trees knew Him well. I imagine that there was scarcely a patch of grass on which He had not knelt, and thereby, in a sense, consecrated by His close and intimate fellowship with God over many nights. But those grey old trees had never heard prayers like these before. Indeed, heaven had never heard prayers like these before and heaven will never hear prayers like these again.⁹

B. The Saviour's mental anguish.

Let us consider first some of the words used by the Gospel writers when they describe for us our Lord's extreme mental anguish in the garden.

(i) 'Amazed'.

Mark records that He 'began to be greatly amazed'.

Make no mistake; Jesus knew all that was going to happen to Him.¹⁰ He knew full well that, from that time until the moment when He would commit His spirit in trust to His Father in death, earth held nothing for Him but a fearful combination of physical, spiritual and mental torture and pain. And, in the face of that, says Mark, He was 'greatly amazed'.

The Greek word¹¹ translated by this phrase comes from a root which means 'to be struck' and carries one of two meanings. It can mean (i) to be struck with astonishment, or (ii) to be struck with a sense of appalling dread.

This actual word is found only three times in the New Testament,¹² and all three occurrences are found in the Gospel according to Mark.

Sometime earlier, Jesus came down from the mountain where He had been transfigured before His disciples. It seems that His face still bore something of the glory which had shone out from Him on the

'Holy Mount',¹³ because we read that 'all the crowd, when they saw Him, were greatly amazed (the same word as here) and they ran to meet Him'.¹⁴

The other (and final) reference is in chapter 16. Very early on the first day of the week, some women (Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome) came to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus. But they arrived too late, for He had already risen. And, as they entered into the tomb, 'they saw a young man (an 'angel'¹⁵) sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe', and, predictably, 'they were alarmed' (the same word as here).¹⁶

There is, then, concentrated into this one expression, a sense both (i) of utter astonishment and amazement, and (ii) of appalling dread.

We cannot but recall earlier incidents recorded by Mark (other than that on the descent from the Mount of Transfiguration, mentioned above) when our Lord caused others to be 'amazed' by His actions.

We read of the occasions when:

- (i) He cast out a demon;
- (ii) He healed a paralysed man; and
- (iii) He stilled a storm with His word.

On each of these occasions, those around Him 'were amazed'.¹⁷

But what, pray, is this? The Lord Himself is now 'greatly amazed'!

(b) 'Very heavy'.

Not only that, but (together this time with Matthew¹⁸) Mark tells us that our Lord was also 'deeply troubled' ('very heavy', KJV¹⁹). He was pressed down, that is, with great anguish, burdened to the utmost degree by some crushing weight.

(c) 'In an agony'.

In his account, Luke contributes a word which Mark does not use. He says that Jesus was 'in an agony'. 'Being in an agony', Luke says, 'He prayed more earnestly ('more fervently', 'more intently')'.²⁰

The word translated 'agony' occurs in many contexts in the writings of the ancient world but one particular and suggestive background is that of the famous Greek games (of which the Olympian Games was a notable example).

To no small extent, the word belonged to the language of the Stadium, and describes well the extreme exertion of the athletes or contestants. We find the same word used also in the Greek classics of some severe inner conflict and struggle ... of the supreme concentration of a person's powers in the face of an impending decision or task.²¹

(d) 'Exceeding sorrowful'.

And then we listen reverently to our Lord's own words, when He spoke of His soul's being 'exceeding sorrowful, even to the point of death'.²²

A few days before, when certain devout Greeks had sought an audience with Him, He was heard to say, 'Now is my soul troubled ('disturbed', 'disquieted').²³ And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this cause ('for this purpose') I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name'.²⁴ But that was several days ago! Now His soul is more than merely 'troubled'!

His soul is now, Mark says, 'exceeding sorrowful'. His soul is, that is, 'deeply grieved on every side'. His soul is 'sad all around', hemmed in and wrapped around with sorrow. Wherever He looks (so the word suggests), all about Him (*above* Him and *beneath* Him, *before* Him and *behind* Him, to *the left* and to *the right* of Him) there stretches out one vast ocean of grief.

This is sorrow to the utmost, a grief beyond description. Our Lord's own expression 'suggests a sorrow so deep it almost kills'.²⁵

In summary.

In summary then, here in the Garden, we witness our Lord Jesus' (the Son of God, no less) (i) experiencing a mixture of amazement and dread, (ii) sustaining the deepest anguish and distress, (iii) suffering conflict and extreme agony, and (iv) enduring measureless sorrow and grief.

And it was all for me!

It is as if the Gospel writers exhausted their entire vocabulary of woe and anguish as they sought to capture and to convey something of the unparalleled ordeal of the Lord Jesus when the thick, black storm clouds of anticipation suddenly burst in fury over His holy head. For so soon, so very soon, He is going to die ... so soon, so very soon, He is going out into the spiritual distance and darkness where no other man has ever been.

C. The physical effects.

Having thought about some of the words used by the Gospel writers to describe our Lord's mental anguish, I want now to note the effects of that great anguish upon Him physically.

(i) His tiredness.

I take for granted the Saviour's natural tiredness, a tiredness clearly mirrored by the drowsiness of His disciples,²⁶ and from which He most certainly was not exempt.²⁷

(ii) His abnormal sweat.

Luke draws attention to our Lord's abnormal sweat,²⁸ which forced itself through the pores of His skin.²⁹

It is no doubt significant that our Lord sweated profusely on an evening which was sufficiently cold that Peter gladly joined the servants of the High Priest around the fire which they had kindled in the court.³⁰ One commentator notes, 'The spring nights at Jerusalem, which is 2610 feet above the level of the sea, are often cold'.³¹

'Being in an agony', Luke records, 'He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat³² became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground'.³³

I note that Dr Luke does not say that He sweat actual blood, although it seems clear that such was not unknown clinically, even in Luke's day.³⁴ It seems rather that (so intense was His inner struggle) our Lord's sweat ran so profusely that it resembled blood flowing freely from a wound.³⁵

One thing is clear, however, namely, that no man would ever have known 'sweat' if sin had not first invaded God's world.³⁶

An aside: God's judgement on man in Genesis 3 and the Saviour's experiences during Passion Week.

Some long time ago, I was fascinated to note that, according to Genesis chapter 3, on account of the sin of the first man, a whole cluster of words was added to man's vocabulary and that each of these words come into play when the Gospel writers describe our Lord's experiences during His passion.

Genesis 3 records, 'cursed is the ground because of you; in sorrow you shall eat of it³⁷ ... thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you³⁸ ... in the sweat of your face you shall eat bread³⁹ ... for you are dust, and to dust you shall return' (man, that is, was to die).⁴⁰ Sin drew behind it, then, (i) sorrow, (ii) sweat, (iii) thorns, (iv) a curse, and (v) death, as sure as a sewing needle draws thread.

And, in connection with our Lord's' Passion Week, we discover references (i) to His sorrow,⁴¹ (ii) to His sweat,⁴² (iii) to the thorns which the soldiers wove and which they put on His head,⁴³ (iv) to the curse which He became for us⁴⁴ and (v) to the death which He died for us.⁴⁵

(iii) His tears.

The Epistle to the Hebrews draws our attention to the Saviour's tears. 'In the days of His flesh, (Jesus) offered up prayers and supplications', we read, 'with loud cries and tears, to Him who was able to save Him out of death'.⁴⁶ And save Him 'out of death' God most certainly did when He raised Him from the grave to glory.⁴⁷

A short time before, Jesus had both (i) wept at the tomb of a friend⁴⁸ and 'burst into tears'⁴⁹ when looking over the city of Jerusalem.⁵⁰ But now, in the Garden, He pleads with loud cries and tears for Himself.

(iv) His posture.

I want us to think now of His posture when He prayed. For we find, not only that His sweat and His tears fell to the ground, but so also did He. 'And going forward a little', we read, 'He fell on the ground ...'.⁵¹

According to Luke, the Lord chose to kneel to pray. 'He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw', we read, 'and He *knelt down* and prayed'.⁵² For his part, Matthew tells us that the Lord then fell prostrate: 'going a little farther He fell on His face and prayed'.⁵³

There had been many occasions when others had earlier fallen down before Him⁵⁴ and soon those who came to capture Him would fall to the ground in His presence.⁵⁵

But now it is the Son of God Himself who falls 'on the ground'.⁵⁶

Yet it seems clear that the Lord Jesus did not throw Himself on His face; He knelt to pray. But He 'fell on the ground', and, according to the tense which Mark uses,⁵⁷ He fell repeatedly – He fell time and time again. That is, He knelt, He fell, He knelt, He fell, in an agony of soul which proved as lengthy and prolonged as it was intense.

Yes, 'lengthy and prolonged'. We can hardly miss the implication of the Saviour's words to Simon Peter when He returned the first time to find the disciples asleep:⁵⁸ 'Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch with me *one hour*'?⁵⁹ So that, in spite of the fact that the inspired *précis* of it can be read in just a few seconds, even our Lord's first time of prayer wasn't at all brief.

(v) An angel 'strengthening Him'.

But, of all the physical effects of our Lord's anguish, perhaps the most remarkable is recorded in the Gospel of Luke, where we read that 'there appeared⁶⁰ to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening⁶¹ Him, and being in an agony He prayed more earnestly ('more intently', 'more fervently').⁶²

That evening, an angel was dispatched from the throne of God with a mission unique in time and eternity ... to pour strength into the prostrate figure in the Garden.

As He later made clear to Peter, the Lord Jesus refused to summon the aid of 'more than twelve legions of angels' to spare Him the suffering of the cross.⁶³ But He does not refuse the aid of this one angel when engaged in earnest prayer.

We read of the intervention of angels at various points in the life of our Lord. But this incident is unique. On other occasions, angels seemingly put in an appearance only after the key and significant event:

(i) We do not read that any angels were present to witness Jesus' actual birth. But, immediately following the account of His birth, we read that angels came both (a) to celebrate that momentous event and (b) to announce the event to shepherds in the Judean countryside around.⁶⁴

(ii) When Jesus was tempted in a wilderness at the outset of His public ministry, no angels shared His temptations with Him. But, immediately following the devil's departure, 'angels came and ministered to Him'.⁶⁵

(iii) We do not read that, when Jesus rose from the dead, any angel was present in the tomb, either (a) to witness the event⁶⁶ or (b) to open the 'very great'⁶⁷ stone door to let Him out. But an angel 'descended from heaven' later to roll back the stone to let others in to see for themselves that His tomb was then gloriously empty.⁶⁸

(iv) And, when He was 'taken up ... into heaven', no angels accompanied Him to heaven or followed in His train. But angels appeared to apostles immediately after to inform them that the same Jesus they had seen go would come back 'in like manner', personally, bodily and visibly.⁶⁹

But not now! The angel of Luke 22 does not appear after the event. He comes during the early part of our Lord's ordeal, and (I tremble to say it) he comes *to strengthen Him*.

And we remember that the One he came to strengthen, though now 'made a little lower than the angels',⁷⁰ was none other than this angel's Creator and Lord!⁷¹

And to think that this very angel will one day be among the innumerable company of angels in heaven who ascribe 'strength' to the glorified Lord in the midst of the throne of God!⁷² But that will be another day. Now in the Garden, it is the role of this single angel to impart strength to Him, following which, I note, 'He prayed more earnestly'.⁷³

We have thought of the words used by the Gospel writers to describe our Lord's mental anguish and of the physical effects of that anguish upon Him. And this brings us now face to face with His prayers themselves.

D. The Saviour's prayers.

Matthew reports our Lord's opening prayer in these words: 'My Father,⁷⁴ if it be possible, let this cup pass from me'.⁷⁵

(i) 'My Father'.

I know of no other recorded instance when Jesus addressed God as 'My Father'.

Oh, yes, on very many occasions He spoke of God in those terms.⁷⁶ Indeed, between them, the four Gospels record the words, 'My Father', coming from the lips of our Lord no less than 45 times.

But, as I say, this is the only time I know of when He prayed to Him using these words.

I have heard Him address God as:

- (i) 'Lord of heaven and earth';⁷⁷
- (ii) 'holy Father';⁷⁸
- (iii) 'righteous Father';⁷⁹ and, on numerous occasions,
- (iv) simply 'Father'.⁸⁰

But here and now it is 'My Father', and, to me, our Lord's use of this expression just here is most moving.

I remind myself that earth rejects Him, men despise Him, His nation disowns Him and His own disciples are shortly to fail and forsake Him. And now it is that He turns to the One (to the only One) who understands what it means for Him to take the cup (brim-full with judgement and suffering) and to drain it.⁸¹

Oh yes, His Father understands! And it is to Him that He turns.

'My Father', He cries, 'if it be possible,⁸² and all things are possible⁸³ for you; take away this cup from me'.⁸⁴

Surely, this should stir us to the depths as we see the Son of God (no less!), fallen on His face with His breast to the ground, crying out, in tears, sweat and agony, 'take away this cup from me'.

(ii) 'That the hour might pass'.

Shortly before crossing the brook Kidron, He had calmly 'lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, *the hour has come*; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you"⁸⁵. But *that* was the other side of the Kidron!

And soon He will declare, with no discernible tremor in His voice, '*The hour has come*. The Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners'.⁸⁶

But here and now, what does He say concerning 'the hour'? No, not, '*the hour has come*; glorify your Son'. No, not, '*the hour has come*. The Son of man is betrayed'. But, as Mark reports it, He 'prayed that, if it were possible, *the hour might pass from Him*'.⁸⁷

Before He had crossed the Kidron, He had taken the time to sing a hymn with His disciples.⁸⁸ But He sings no hymn in Gethsemane. The time for singing has long gone. This is the time, not for singing, but for 'loud cries and tears'.⁸⁹

(iii) 'Take away this cup'.

Does it startle you that the Lord prays as He does? Does it shock you to hear the Son of God pleading that the 'cup' (which clearly was the Father's will and purpose for Him to drink⁹⁰) might pass from Him⁹¹ ... that the Father would take it away from Him?⁹²

Well, it ought not!

For this, please remember, is 'the Holy One' – the sinless Son of God who loathes and detests sin with every particle of His being. And He knows that, within much less than twenty-four hours, He is to

be plunged into the most fearful abyss of suffering imaginable, when God will make 'Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin'.⁹³

And from that prospect, inevitably He recoils.

This, please remember, is God's 'beloved Son'.⁹⁴ And He knows that, within a matter of hours, He, who has *never* known anything but the unreserved love of His Father⁹⁵ and has ever enjoyed His eternal embrace,⁹⁶ is to be utterly forsaken and abandoned by God,⁹⁷ when He lays 'on Him the iniquity of us all'⁹⁸

It is true that it is not until tomorrow that He will actually be immersed in the raging swell of God's judgement and forsaking. But this night in Gethsemane He stands as it were on the shore of that ocean. He can hear the surf breaking at His feet and can feel the spray from that tempestuous deep strike His face as He anticipates with dread that awful moment when He will stand where each of us should have stood.

Do you wonder, then, that the Saviour shrank back as the tsunami of horrific suffering rose before Him? ... that He shrank back from 'the cup'? ... that He shrank back from 'the hour' when He would no longer stand on the shore, hearing the surf breaking at His feet and feeling the spray striking His face, but when He would be totally immersed in the raging swell of God's judgement.

We read in Isaiah's prophecy that God would one day announce to the city of Jerusalem: 'I have taken from your hand the cup ... of my fury; you shall drink it no more'.⁹⁹ But the Lord Jesus knows that the cup which He is about to drink is filled for Him as no cup had ever been (or would ever be) filled for Jerusalem.

It is, surely, no surprise then that the Saviour prays in His agony, 'take away this cup from me'.

And, if words mean anything, there can be no doubt that, *if* He had ended His prayer at that point, it would have all been over! There would have been no 'cup' for Him to drink ... no judgement for Him to suffer ... no cross for Him to endure!

'Take away this cup from me' was the prayer which ascended from the Garden ... up, up, up to the very throne of God. And it is not difficult to imagine the vast array of angels around that throne hovering motionless, with bated breath, at the sound of His heart-rending cry.

Assuredly, if our Lord had stopped at that point and simply added His 'Even so'¹⁰⁰ (His 'Amen'), there would have been no Golgotha and there would have been no salvation for you or me, or for anyone else.

For my part, I take most seriously the words which the Saviour speaks a short time after to well-meaning Peter, 'Put your sword back into its place ... Do you think that I cannot call on my Father, and He will provide me at once with more than twelve legions of angels?'¹⁰¹

Scholars estimate that 'twelve legions' would have numbered up to 72 thousand troops. And, with his extensive knowledge of his Old Testament, Peter would have been well aware of the remarkable occasion when the Assyrian invasion and planned siege of Jerusalem¹⁰² came to an abrupt end, because, in the words of scripture, 'the Lord sent an angel'¹⁰³ (yes, just one) who 'smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and eighty-five thousand'.¹⁰⁴

You don't need to be the brightest bulb in the chandelier to work out that, if just one angel could wipe out the bulk of the mighty Assyrian army, a troop of heavenly 'reinforcements' in the form of 'more than twelve legions of angels' would have made mincemeat of Judas and the 'crowd with swords and clubs'¹⁰⁵ who arrayed themselves against Jesus and His disciples.

But that was not part of God's programme.

(iv) 'Not what I will, but what you will'.

The Lord Jesus had come to do a great work. And, having prayed, 'Take away this cup from me', in perfect submission to the will of Him who had sent Him (not to say, in boundless love for me), He qualified His prayer before it could be acted on, adding, 'Yet ('howbeit', 'nevertheless'¹⁰⁶) not what *I* will, but what *you* will'.

Consider the meaningful words of J. W. McGarvey: 'There is a pause—a solemn and momentous pause freighted with the destinies of a following world—when there follows the ever blessed words, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt"'.¹⁰⁷

Matthew records, 'He went away the second time and prayed, saying, "O my Father, if this cup cannot pass away from me unless I drink it, your will be done"'.¹⁰⁸

Some three years previously, He had taught His disciples to pray, 'Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven'.¹⁰⁹ And I cannot help wondering whether, now, as He prays those first words Himself, He recalls (if only for a brief moment) that earlier occasion.

Whether that is so or not, we can be sure that heaven had never before heard prayers like those prayed this night.

And, thank God, heaven doesn't need to hear prayers like these ever again, for 'Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many'.¹¹⁰ His sacrificial death is 'unrepeatable because absolutely sufficient'.¹¹¹

Our reading more or less concluded with our Lord's words, 'Rise up, let us go';¹¹² behold, the one who betrays me is at hand'. Suggestively, the word behind that expression 'let us go'¹¹³ is used outside the New Testament in a military context with the meaning, 'Let us advance ... let us go forward to battle'.¹¹⁴ And, in effect, that is what our Lord says to His apostles, as He stretches out His hands to take the cup from which moments before He had drunk.

E. The two Gardens.

It is not difficult for us to contrast (i) our Lord's submission to God's will in the Garden of Gethsemane to (ii) Adam's refusal to submit to God's will in the Garden of Eden. And, indeed, we have the highest authority for doing so.

The apostle Paul drew out the contrast clearly: 'As through one trespass the judgement came unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous'.¹¹⁵

In the Garden of Eden, the first man had faced a momentous choice. He had to decide whose will he would do; God's will or his own will. And, sadly, in effect, Adam said to God, 'Not as you will, but as I will' ... 'Not your will, but mine be done'!

Yet, having once made his decision, Adam had proceeded to do something else. He had proceeded to confirm and ratify his decision by performing an action at a tree.¹¹⁶

But, here in another Garden (that of Gethsemane), 'the second man',¹¹⁷ our Lord Jesus, reverses the decision made by the first man, saying, 'Not as I will, but as you will'¹¹⁸ ... 'Not my will, but yours be done'.¹¹⁹ But, as had been the case with Adam long before, He proceeds to confirm and to ratify His decision by performing an action at a tree.¹²⁰

As we know all too well, the first man's decision and action led to the most devastating and dire consequences, not only for himself but also for all those linked to him by descent, bringing condemnation and death on the entire human race.

But, praise God, the second man's decision and action have secured the most blessed and glorious consequences for everyone who is linked with Him by faith, bestowing justification and life on every last one of His people.

F. A concluding thought.

I leave the last word to saintly Robert Cleaver Chapman:

In His spotless soul's distress,
I perceive my guiltiness;
Oh how vile my low estate,
Since my ransom was so great!¹²¹

Notes

¹ Judas Iscariot.

Mine own Apostle, who the bag did beare,
Though he had all I had did not forbear
To sell me also, and to put me there:
Was ever grief like mine?

For thirtie pence he did my death devise,
Who at three hundred did the ointment prize,
Not half so sweet as my sweet sacrifice:
Was ever grief like mine?

The English Poems of George Herbert, page 48.

² John 19. 30.

³ Heb. 1. 3.

⁴ John 18. 11.

⁵ Justin Martyr, *'Dialogue with Trypho'*, chapter 103.

⁶ John 18. 1.

⁷ John 18. 2.

⁸ Luke 22. 39; cf. Luke 21. 37.

⁹ 'Christ being raised from the dead *dies no more*', Rom. 6. 9; 'Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many', Heb. 9. 28.

¹⁰ 'Jesus therefore, knowing all things that were coming upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?"', John 18. 4.

¹¹ The Greek word is *'ἐκθαμβέω'*.

¹² The word occurs just once in the Greek Old Testament: 'After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible (*'ἐκθαμβον'*), and exceeding strong', Dan. 7. 7.

¹³ 2 Pet. 1. 18.

¹⁴ Mark 9. 15.

¹⁵ Matt. 28. 5; Luke 24. 23.

¹⁶ Mark 16. 5-6; the word occurs, not only in verse 5, but in verse 6, 'Be not alarmed'.

¹⁷ Mark 1. 27; 2. 12; 6. 51. In each of these references, Mark uses the word *'θαμβέω'*, which is not as intensive as that which he uses in Mark 9. 15; 14. 33; 16. 5-6.

¹⁸ Matt. 26. 37.

¹⁹ Mark 14. 33; a different word from that used of the disciples' eyes, Mark 14. 40.

²⁰ Luke 22. 43-44.

²¹ 'Agony occurs only here. It is used by medical writers, and the fact of a sweat accompanying an agony is also mentioned by them', Marvin R. Vincent, *'Vincent's Word Studies'*, on Luke 22. 44.

²² Mark 14. 34. Cf. the recent sorrow of His disciples, Mark 14. 19.

²³ The Greek word, *'παράσσω'*. Compare the use of the word concerning the Lord Jesus in John 11. 33 and 13. 21, and contrast its use by Him in John 14. 1, 27.

²⁴ John 12. 27-28.

²⁵ D. A. Carson, *'Matthew'* (The Expositor's Bible), on Matt. 26. 38.

²⁶ Mark 14. 37-41.

²⁷ Mark 4. 36-38; John 4. 6.

²⁸ When one of the eyewitnesses reported this to Dr Luke during his researches, Luke 1. 2-3, he registered that it was abnormal.

²⁹ Luke 22. 44.

³⁰ Luke 22. 55.

³¹ F. W. Farrar, '*Luke*' (The Cambridge Bible), page 335.

³² Man would never have known sweat had sin not entered first.

³³ Luke 22. 44. Cf. Luke's use of the word *ὡσεὶ* of the Holy Spirit 'like a dove', Luke 3. 22, of cloven tongues 'like as of fire', Acts 2. 3, of Stephen's face which was seen 'as it had been' the face of an angel, and of what fell from Saul's eyes 'as it had been scales', Acts 9. 18.

³⁴ 'If the blood get exceedingly liquid, animals fall sick; for the blood then turns into something like ichor, or a liquid so thin that it at times has been known to exude through the pores like sweat', Aristotle, '*The History of Animals*', Book 3, part 19. But Aristotle is writing of animals and not men. But see, 'A thorough search of the medical literature demonstrates that such a condition, while admittedly rare, does occur in humans. Commonly referred to as hematidrosis or hemohidrosis, this condition results in the excretion of blood or blood pigment in the sweat. Under conditions of great emotional stress, tiny capillaries in the sweat glands can rupture, thus mixing blood with perspiration. This condition has been reported in extreme instances of stress', R.L Sutton, Jr., '*Diseases of the Skin*, eleventh edition, pages 1393-1394. 'During the waning years of the 20th century, 76 cases of *hematidrosis* were studied and classified into categories according to causative factors. The most frequent causes of the phenomenon were found to be "acute fear" and "intense mental contemplation"', Dave Miller, accessed at <https://apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=13&article=2323>.

³⁵ Luke 22. 44, 55.

³⁶ Gen. 3. 19.

³⁷ Gen. 3. 17.

³⁸ Gen. 3. 18.

³⁹ Gen. 3. 19a.

⁴⁰ Gen. 3. 19c.

⁴¹ Matt. 26. 37-38.

⁴² Luke 22. 44.

⁴³ Matt. 27. 29.

⁴⁴ Gal. 3. 13.

⁴⁵ Matt. 27. 50; Rom. 5. 6, 8; 6. 10 etc..

⁴⁶ Heb. 5. 7.

⁴⁷ 1 Pet. 1. 21.

⁴⁸ John 11. 35.

⁴⁹ A. T. Robertson, '*Robertson's Word Pictures*'.

⁵⁰ Luke 19. 41.

⁵¹ Mark 14. 35.

⁵² Luke 22. 41 (literally, 'He placed the knees'). The custom of the time was to pray standing with the eyes raised to heaven: Mark 6. 41; Luke 18. 11; John 17. 1. The fact that the Lord chose now to kneel underlines the seriousness of the hour to Him.

⁵³ Matt. 26. 39.

⁵⁴ Matt. 2. 11; Mark 3. 11; 5. 6, 22, 33; 7. 25; Luke 5. 8, 12; 17. 16; John 11. 32.

55 John 18. 4-6.

56 Mark 14. 35.

57 The imperfect tense (*επιπτεν*), Mark 14. 35.

58 With Psalm 69. 20 in mind, ponder the following moving lines:
Backwards and forwards thrice He ran,
As if He sought some help from man,
Or wished, at least, they would console
(’Twas all they could) His tortured soul.

*Whate’er He sought for, there was none;
Our Captain fought the field alone;
Soon as the Chief to battle led,
That moment every soldier fled.*

(Joseph Hart, ‘*Come All Ye Chosen Saints of God*’, Part I, Stanzas 8 and 9.)

59 Matt. 26. 40.

60 Cf. Luke 1. 11.

61 The word ‘*ενισχυων*’ occurs only here and Acts 9. 19 in the New Testament. It is, however, used 48 times in the Greek Old Testament, including in Hosea 12. 4 of Jacob: ‘He prevailed (*ενισχυσεν*’, ‘was strong’) with the angel’.

62 Luke 22. 43-44.

63 Matt. 26. 53.

64 Luke 2. 8-14.

65 Matt. 4. 11.

66 The resurrection of Jesus took place ‘offstage’, so to speak, for nobody was with Him in the tomb when He rose.

67 Mark 16. 4.

68 Matt. 28. 1-6.

69 Acts 1. 9-11.

70 Heb. 2. 9.

71 Col. 1. 16; 2. 10.

72 Rev. 5. 6, 11-12.

73 Luke 22. 44.

74 Mark records the address, ‘Abba’, Mark 14. 36.

75 Matt. 26. 39. His second prayer begins the same: ‘*My Father*, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done’, Matt. 26. 42.

76 For example, ‘The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?’, John 18. 11

77 Matt. 11. 25; Luke 10. 21.

78 John 17. 11.

79 John 17. 25.

80 Matt. 11. 25-26; Luke 10. 21; 23. 34, 46; John 11. 41; 12. 27-28; 17. 1, 5, 21, 24.

⁸¹ Matt. 26. 42; John 18. 11.

Death and the curse were in our cup:
O Christ, 'twas full for Thee;
But *Thou hast drained the last dark drop*,
'Tis empty now for me.
That bitter cup, love drank it up;
Now blessing's draught for me.

(‘O Christ, what burdens bowed Thy head’, by Mrs Anne R. Cousin.)

Truly, only the Godhead knows what the Holy One endured for us.

⁸² Matt. 26. 39.

⁸³ Mark 14. 36 (‘*πάντα δυνατά*’). Compare Jesus’ earlier teaching, when He told (i) His disciples, ‘With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible (‘*πάντα δυνατά*’), Matt. 19. 26, and (ii) a distraught father, ‘All things are possible (‘*πάντα δυνατά*’) for the one who has faith’, Mark 9. 23.

⁸⁴ Mark 14. 36.

⁸⁵ John 17. 1.

⁸⁶ Mark 14. 41.

⁸⁷ Mark 14. 35.

⁸⁸ Mark 14. 26.

⁸⁹ Heb. 5. 7.

⁹⁰ John 18. 11. And we cannot forget that, to our Lord, His Father’s will was His food (John 4. 33-34), His goal (John 5. 30), His purpose (John 6. 38) and His delight (Psa. 40. 6-8 with Heb. 10. 5-7).

⁹¹ Matt. 26. 39.

⁹² Mark 14. 36.

⁹³ 2 Cor. 5. 21.

⁹⁴ Mark 1. 11; 9. 7.

⁹⁵ John 17. 24.

⁹⁶ John 1. 18.

⁹⁷ Mark 15. 34.

⁹⁸ Isa. 53. 6.

⁹⁹ Isa. 51. 22.

¹⁰⁰ Matt. 11. 26.

¹⁰¹ Matt. 26. 52-54. A single request (‘*παρακαλεσαι*’, the aorist tense) to His Father would have brought more than twelve legions of angels from heaven. He would not have had to ask twice!

¹⁰² 2 Chron. 32. 1-2.

¹⁰³ 2 Chron. 32. 21. This was at night, 2 Kings 19. 35.

¹⁰⁴ 2 Kings 19. 35; Isa. 37. 36. I note that Peter himself later spoke of ‘angels, greater in might and power’, 2 Pet. 2. 11; cf. Psa. 103. 20.

¹⁰⁵ Mark 14. 43. Those sent to arrest Jesus may have numbered 200 (a maniple; being one translation of the word used in John 18. 3, 12).

‘The noun *speira* can refer to a ‘maniple’ of only 200 men, and it is not necessary to assume that an entire maniple was present’, D. A Carson, ‘*The Gospel according to John*’, page 577.

‘The original word (σπεῖρα) is used by Polybius as the representative of the Latin *manipulus* (not *cohors*: see Polyb., XI. 23), consisting of about two hundred men, the third part of a cohort’, B. F. Westcott, ‘*The Gospel according to St. John*’, on John 18. 3.

¹⁰⁶ Greek, ‘ἀλλά’.

¹⁰⁷ ‘*The New Testament Commentary, Volume I: Matthew and Mark*’, on Matt. 26. 39.

¹⁰⁸ Matt 26. 42.

¹⁰⁹ Matt. 6. 10.

¹¹⁰ Heb. 9. 28.

¹¹¹ 'Christ's second coming to bring final salvation for His people is the ultimate proof that his sacrifice was "once for all", *unrepeatable because absolutely sufficient* ... Christ's "once-for-all" self-offering is so definitive that His second coming will be totally "without" reference to the sin problem. This thorough removal of sin at His first coming (v. 26) paved the way for Him to bring full and final "salvation" for its beneficiaries at His second', G. L Cockerill, '*Hebrews*' (New International Commentary on the New Testament), on Heb. 9. 28.

¹¹² Mark 14. 42. Compare the Lord's words back at the outset of His public ministry: '*Let us go to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came forth*', Mark 1. 38.

¹¹³ The Greek word, '*ἄγωμεν*'.

¹¹⁴ 'In military contexts '*ἄγωμεν*' is used as a command, "Forward", "March", or "Advance!", Craig A. Evans, '*Mark*' (Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 34b), on Mark 14. 42. See the use of the English expression in Num. 13. 30; Isa. 7. 6; Jer. 4. 5; 6. 4-5.

¹¹⁵ Rom. 5. 18-19 (Revised Version).

¹¹⁶ Gen. 3. 5.

¹¹⁷ 1 Cor. 15. 47.

¹¹⁸ Matt. 26. 39; Mark 14. 36.

¹¹⁹ Luke 22. 42.

¹²⁰ 1 Pet. 2. 24.

¹²¹ The fourth verse of the hymn, '*Oh, My Saviour Crucified*'.