

him: "Behold and see it there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow!"

Christ's agony—how shall we account for it?

It was not bodily pain, as in the soldier's hall and on the cross next day. Here in the quiet garden, with only three friends near him, his suffering was purely mental.

It was not from fear of what he knew was coming. If an apostle could say, "None of these things move me," (Acts xx. 24.) would the Master be less brave? Nay, he went to his death steadfastly, (Luke ix. 51,) eagerly, (Luke xii. 50,) deliberately, (John x. 18.)

It was not merely owing to Satan's assaults. No doubt Satan was there, making a last desperate attempt to overcome him. (See John xiv. 30; Luke xxii. 53.) But Jesus had resisted him before in the wilderness, and he was not then in an agony like this.

It was not merely that he felt the shame of being treated, holy and harmless as he was, like a vile criminal. Certainly it is very hard to be "numbered with transgressors" when you are innocent, but even that Jesus bore without shrinking.

No, it was more than all this. It was that he was "wounded for our transgression," that upon him were then being laid "the iniquity of us all." And this is why we cannot fathom that suffering.

We cannot understand the woe
Thy love was pleased to bear;
O Lamb of God, we only know
That all our hopes are there.

A very interesting application may be drawn in this lesson from the contrast between Christ and the three apostles. We see—

1. *A picture of what we are.* Think—Have we never slept when we ought to have prayed? Have we never fallen into sin when we might have been safe if we had prayed in time? Have we never, like Peter, thought, "I would never do such a thing," and then done it?

2. *A model of what we ought to be.* See 1 Pet. ii. 21. If Jesus needed to pray, how much more do we! If he could say, "Not my will, but thine be done," how much more should we say it!

Then observe the result in either case. Jesus prayed: and when the traitor and the soldiers appeared, he could meet them with such calmness that his quiet words felled them to the ground, (John xviii. 4-6.) Peter and the others slept,

and when the testing time came, "they all forsook him and fled."

Are we conscience-stricken? feeling that we are so like the picture, so unlike the Model? Let us come to him. The willing Sufferer will be a willing Saviour.

Berean Notes.

I. GENERAL STATEMENT.

Leaving Jerusalem at the conclusion of the Last Supper, Jesus with his disciples goes across the Kedron to the garden where he was wont to pray.

II. NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

Topic: Jesus treading the wine-press alone.

1. JESUS SORROWING IN THE GARDEN, vers. 36-38. (1.) *The place of prayer.* COMETH—from Jerusalem—(on Thursday night) to GETH-SEMANE—a "garden." John xviii. 1. The term signifies *oil-press*. A retired spot just across the Kedron. Here Jesus often went to pray. John xviii. 2; Luke xxi. 37. (2.) *The favored companions.* PETER AND JAMES AND JOHN. "The elect among the elect." They were before chosen to see his glory on the mount. Matt. xvii. 1, 2. The humanity of Jesus sought companionship, sympathy, both in joy and in sorrow. (3.) *The sorrowful soul.* BEGAN, and grew more and more sorrowful, and VERY HEAVY. The two terms signifying a sorrow that *dissolves* the spirit and *overwhelms* body and soul in anguish. EVEN UNTO DEATH. Soul and body must separate, unless help come. TARRY YE HERE. His anguish is too great for sympathy. Jesus will be utterly alone. "Of the people there was none with me." Isa. lxiii. 3.

O! there are times of awful loneliness upon the earth; times when, as the sun sinks beneath the horizon, our hearts sink with it. . . . Times when, as the sun rises again in its freshness and strength, we feel that it brings to us no light, no heat, no healing on its wings. We have no flowers in our hearts to unfold beneath its beams, our flowers have been plucked, and bloom with us no more; we have no jewels to flash and glitter in its rays, we have had our treasure taken from us, and our heart is like the rifled casket, good for nothing in itself.—*Power*.

2. THE AGONY OF PRAYER, vers. 39, 42, 44. WENT!...FURTHER. "About a stone's cast," Luke xxii. 41, so that, possibly, the three disciples heard his prayer of agony. THIS CUP.