

in which God's glory was concerned, and man's destinies were involved.

Let us enter with Christ and his disciples into the garden. Let us contemplate the scene there. And, first, who was the sufferer? It was the Son of God.

Do you ask, why the incarnation of the Son of God? Why this mystery? We point you to this scene. We bid you read the explanation there. We bid you look at that agony. There we have the explanation—there we have the solution. That is the Son of God who enters with the three beloved disciples into the garden, at night—the moon casting her silver beams upon the landscape. You perceive he is sadly perplexed: he is sorely amazed: he is well nigh overwhelmed. He took Peter and James and John, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. He said unto them: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." He retired from them a few paces, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying: "O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt." He went away a second time, and prayed, saying, "O my father, if this cup may not pass away from me except I drink it, thy will be done." A third time he did the same, and prayed, saying the same words. In Luke we are informed, that "there appeared an angel from heaven strengthening him," and that "being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Whence all this agony? Why those bitter tears, those strong cries—that prayer—that bloody sweat? Was there any external cause of such suffering? We can perceive none—there was none. Was it *boldly* anguish? It was not. "My soul," says he, "is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Agony is the suffering of the soul, not of the body. What then was the cause of this agony? Was it the fear of death? He knew he was to die—to die upon the cross—to die as a malefactor. He knew the severity of the death he was to suffer. He knew all its lingering torture. He knew its ignominy. "He had a full and clear prospect of all the sufferings that were before him," says Henry: "He foresaw the treachery of Judas, the unkindness of Peter, the malice of the Jews, and their base ingratitude. He knew that he should now in a few hours be scourged,

spit upon, crowned with thorns, nailed to the cross; death in its most dreadful appearances, death in pomp, attended with all its terrors, looked him in the face." But this was not enough to produce the agony here indicated. The fear of death is so overwhelming only to the guilty—Christ was not guilty: he was holy and harmless. He had done no sin—neither was guile found in his mouth. He was separate from sinners. The Prince of this world came, and had nothing in him. Why then should he fear death? What was terrible in it to him? Was it the *kind* of death? Was it the fearfulness and the ignominy of that death? Was it its public, its shameful, and excruciating character? Neither need this have so overwhelmed him. Martyrs have exulted at the stake—they have counted it all honour to suffer in a good cause—they have rejoiced, they have gloried, in what might be deemed by some their shame. Have not patriots and heroes bled? And why, then, the peculiar agony of Christ?—Was he less heroic in spirit? Was he suffering on his own account? Could any evil be laid to his charge? Had he less equanimity, less fortitude, less self-devotion than heroes and martyrs? Was he less prepared to die? Was he less forward in the cause of truth and of God? The cause is found in none of these. Christ had already shown more courage than ever a hero or a martyr,—more self-devotion—more blamelessness of life—more spotlessness of character—more readiness to suffer—even to die. He had done what no martyr ever did: he had come up voluntarily to lay down his life. He put himself into the hands of his enemies. He was in Gethsemane, the scene where he was betrayed, of his own accord. He did not need to come there. His own determination to suffer brought him to Jerusalem. Even when the traitor came out with the band of soldiers, with swords and with staves, to take him, he could have rescued himself out of their hands: a word made them go backward, and fall to the ground; and the same word could have made them dead men. It was not necessary, then, that he should suffer, but as he chose. There was, indeed, a necessity; but not such a necessity as to take from his death the character of devotedness, willingness, readiness to lay down his life. He was more self-devoted than any martyr. He did not fear death for itself. He had in-