

A PASSION TIDE MEDITATION.

"Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow."

It was a lonely sorrow, as all sorrow must be. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness," and none other, save God only, can measure or understand it. "I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with me." Alone. "I looked for some to have pity upon me, but there was no man, neither found I any to comfort me." The man of Sorrows, therefore, the King of Grief, must tread the Sorrowful Way in utter loneliness, even as we. "All His disciples forsook Him and fled."

It was an unmerited sorrow. "I paid them the things that I never took." Saintly George Herbert, an ardent lover of Passion, bids us dwell on this:

"Man stole the fruit, but I must climb the tree,

"The Tree of Life to all but only Me:

"Was ever grief like Mine?"

Some sorrows, fallen on "beloved ones, than self more dear," seem undeserved, inexplicable, and, indeed, are only to be read as proofs of Divine Love: "Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth." And He loved none as He did the Son of His love, whom He chastened most sorely.

It was a bitter sorrow. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." The chalice of His Passion was so bitter that even He prayed that it might pass from Him. Yet He drank it, to the very dregs. "Being in an agony, He prayed the more earnestly." And to Him, as to us, the needed help was given. "My flesh and my heart faileth": "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." And the answer? "There appeared unto Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him." So, too, when we come to drink of the same "chalice of salvation," we shall know, in truth, that "He hath given His angels charge concerning thee, to keep thee in all thy ways"; most of all, surely, in the way that leads to Gethsemane and to Calvary.

It was a disciplinary sorrow. Therein consists its wonder, its surprising mystery. Why should He suffer? Let Saint Paul tell us. "For it became Him, *decebat enim Eum*" — it was fitting—