

Christ's Agony

by Jonathan Edwards

Christ's agony in the garden was a time of great conflict and struggle, in which he wrestled with God over the cup of wrath that he was to drink on the cross.

Scripture: Matthew 26:39, Matthew 26:42, Mark 14:39, Luke 22:44, Hebrews 5:7-8

Topics: "Christ's Suffering", "God's Will"

Description

Jonathan Edwards preaches about the intense agony and earnest prayer of Jesus Christ in the garden of Gethsemane, highlighting how Christ, strengthened by an angel, wrestled with God in prayer, not to avoid the cup of suffering, but to submit to God's will in enduring it. Christ's prayer was a supplication for strength and support to fulfill God's command of drinking the bitter cup, fearing failure in obedience. His strong crying and tears reflected his earnest desire to be saved from death by overcoming it through obedience. Christ's submission to God's will in his suffering exemplifies his unwavering love and obedience, contrasting with the sottishness of sinners who fearlessly disregard the wrath of God.

Transcript

LUKE 22:44.

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.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ, in his original nature, was infinitely above all suffering, for he was "God over all, blessed for evermore;" but, when he became man, he was not only capable of suffering, but partook of that nature that is remarkably feeble and exposed to suffering. The human nature, on account of its weakness, is in Scripture compared to the grass of the field, which easily withers and decays. So it is compared to a leaf; and to the dry stubble; and to a blast of wind: and the nature of feeble man is said to be but dust and ashes, to have its foundation in the dust, and to be crushed before the moth.

It was this nature, with all its weakness and exposedness to sufferings, which Christ, who is the Lord God omnipotent, took upon him. He did not take the human nature on him in its first, most perfect and vigorous state, but in that feeble forlorn state which it is in since the fall; and therefore Christ is called "a tender plant," and "a root out of a dry ground." Isa. 53:2. "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."

Thus, as Christ's principal errand into the world was suffering, so, agreeably to that errand, he came with such a nature and in such circumstances, as most made way for his suffering; so his whole life was filled up with suffering, he began to suffer in his infancy, but his suffering increased the more he drew near to the close of his life. His suffering after his public ministry began, was probably much greater than before; and the latter part of the time of his public ministry seems to have been distinguished by suffering.

The longer Christ lived in the world, the more men saw and heard of him, the more they hated him. His enemies were more and more enraged by the continuance of the opposition that he made to their lusts; and the devil having been often baffled by him, grew more and more enraged, and strengthened the battle more and more against him: so that the cloud over Christ's head grew darker and darker, as long as he lived in the world, till it was in its greatest blackness when he hung upon the cross and cried out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!

Before this, it was exceedingly dark, in the time of his agony in the garden; of which we have an account in the words now read; and which I propose to make the subject of my present discourse. The word agony properly signifies an earnest strife, such as is witnessed in wrestling, running, or fighting. And therefore in Luke 13:24. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able;" the word in the original, translated strive, is *agnizese*.

"Agonize, to enter in at the strait gate." The word is especially used for that sort of strife, which in those days was exhibited in the Olympic games, in which men strove for the mastery in running, wrestling, and other such kinds of exercises; and a prize was set up that was bestowed on the conqueror. Those, who thus contended, were, in the language then in use, said to agonize. Thus the apostle in his epistle to the Christians of Corinth, a city of Greece, where such games were annually exhibited, says in allusion to the strivings of the combatants, "And every man that striveth for the mastery," in the original, every one that agonizeth, "is temperate in all things."

The place where those games were held was called *Agwn*, or the place of agony; and the word is particularly used in Scripture for that striving in earnest prayer wherein persons wrestle with God: they are said to agonize, or to be in agony, in prayer. So the word is used Rom. 15:30. "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me:" in the original *sunagwnizesqai moi*, that ye agonize together with me.

So Col. 4:12. "Always labouring fervently for you in prayer, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God:" in the original *agnizwn agonizing* for you. So that when it is said in the text that Christ was in an agony, the meaning is, that his soul was in a great and earnest strife and conflict. It was so in two respects:

1. As his soul was in a great and sore conflict with those terrible and amazing views and apprehensions which he then had.
2. As he was at the same time in great labour and earnest strife with God in prayer.

I propose therefore, in discoursing on the subject of Christ's agony, distinctly to unfold it, under these two propositions,

- I. That the soul of Christ in his agony in the garden had a sore conflict with those terrible and amazing views and apprehensions, of which he was then the subject.

II. That the soul of Christ in his agony in the garden had a great and earnest labour and struggle with God in prayer.

I. The soul of Christ in his agony in the garden had a sore conflict with those terrible amazing views and apprehensions, of which he was then the subject.

In illustrating this proposition I shall endeavour to show,

1. What those views and apprehensions were.
2. That the conflict or agony of Christ's soul was occasioned by those views and apprehensions.
3. That this conflict was peculiarly great and distressing; and,
4. What we may suppose to be the special design of God in giving Christ those terrible views and apprehensions, and causing him to suffer that dreadful conflict, before he was crucified.

I proposed to show,

First, What were those terrible views and amazing apprehensions which Christ had in his agony. This may be explained by considering,

1. The cause of those views and apprehensions; and,
2. The manner in which they were then experienced.

1. The cause of those views and apprehensions, which Christ had in his agony in the garden, was the bitter cup which he was soon after to drink on the cross. The sufferings which Christ underwent in his agony in the garden, were not his greatest sufferings; though they were so very great. But his last sufferings upon the cross were his principal sufferings; and therefore they are called "the cup that he had to drink." The sufferings of the cross, under which he was slain, are always in the Scriptures represented as the main sufferings of Christ; those in which especially "he bare our sins in his own body," and made atonement for sin. His enduring the cross, his humbling himself, and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, is spoken of as the main thing wherein his sufferings appeared. This is the cup that Christ had set before him in his agony. It is manifest that Christ had this in view at this time, from the prayers which he then offered. According to Matthew, Christ made three prayers that evening while in the garden of Gethsemane, and all on this one subject, the bitter cup that he was to drink. Of the first, we have an account in Matt. 26:39. "And he went a little farther, 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:" of the second in the 42d verse, "He went away again the second time and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done:" and of the third in the 44th verse, "And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words." From this it plainly appears what it was of which Christ had such terrible views and apprehensions at that time. What he thus insists on in his prayers, shows on what his mind was so deeply intent. It was his sufferings on the cross, which were to be endured the next day, when there should be darkness over all the earth, and at the same time a deeper darkness over the soul of Christ, of which he had now such lively views and distressing apprehensions.

2. The manner in which this bitter cup was now set in Christ's view.

(1.) He had a lively apprehension of it impressed at that time on his mind. He had an apprehension of the cup that he was to drink before. His principal errand into the world was to drink that cup, and he therefore was never unthoughtful of it, but always bore it in his mind, and often spoke of it to his disciples. Thus Matt. 16:21. "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day ." Again ch. 20:17, 18, 19. "And Jesus going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death. And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again." The same thing was the subject of conversation on the mount with Moses and Elias when he was transfigured. So he speaks of his bloody baptism, Luke 12:50. "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" He speaks of it again to Zebedee's children, Matt. 20:22. "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able." He spake of his being lifted up. John 8:28. "Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things ." John 12:34. "The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?" So he spake of destroying the temple of his body, John 2:19. "Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up ." And he was very much in speaking of it a little before his agony, in his dying counsels to his disciples in the 12th and 13th ch. of John. Thus this was not the first time that Christ had this bitter cup in his view. On the contrary, he seems always to have had it in view. But it seems that at this time God gave him an extraordinary view of it. A sense of that wrath that was to be poured out upon him, and of those amazing sufferings that he was to undergo, was strongly impressed on his mind by the immediate power of God; so that he had far more full and lively apprehensions of the bitterness of the cup which he was to drink than he ever had before, and these apprehensions were so terrible, that his feeble human nature shrunk at the sight, and was ready to sink.

2. The cup of bitterness was now represented as just at hand. He had not only a more clear and lively view of it than before; but it was now set directly before him, that he might without delay take it up and drink it; for then, within that same hour, Judas was to come with his band of men, and he was then to deliver up himself into their hands to the end that he might drink this cup the next day; unless indeed he refused to take it, and so made his escape from that place where Judas would come; which he had opportunity enough to do if he had been so minded. Having thus shown what those terrible views and apprehensions were which Christ had in the time of his agony; I shall endeavour to show,

II. That the conflict which the soul of Christ then endured was occasioned by those views and apprehensions. The sorrow and distress which his soul then suffered, arose from that lively, and full, and immediate view which he had then given him of that cup of wrath; by which God the Father did as it were set the cup down before him, for him to take it and drink it. Some have inquired, what was the occasion of that distress and agony, and many speculations there have been about it, but the account which the Scripture itself gives us is sufficiently full in this matter, and does not leave room for speculation or doubt. The thing that Christ's mind was so full of at that time was, without doubt, the same with that which his mouth was so full of: it was the dread which his feeble human nature had of that dreadful cup, which was vastly more terrible than Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace. He had then a near view of that furnace of wrath, into which he was to be cast; he was brought to the mouth of the furnace that he might look into it,

and stand and view its raging flames, and see the glowings of its heat, that he might know where he was going and what he was about to suffer. This was the thing that filled his soul with sorrow and darkness, this terrible sight as it were overwhelmed him. For what was that human nature of Christ to such mighty wrath as this? it was in itself, without the supports of God, but a feeble worm of the dust, a thing that was crushed before the moth, none of God's children ever had such a cup set before them, as this first being of every creature had. But not to dwell any longer on this, I hasten to show,

III. That the conflict in Christ's soul, in this view of his last sufferings, was dreadful, beyond all expression or conception. This will appear,

1. From what is said of its dreadfulness in the history. By one evangelist we are told, (Matt. 26:37.) "He began to be sorrowful and very heavy; and by another, (Mark 14:33.) "And he taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy." These expressions hold forth the intense and overwhelming distress that his soul was in. Luke's expression in the text of his being in an agony, according to the signification of that word in the original, implies no common degree of sorrow, but such extreme distress that his nature had a most violent conflict with it, as a man that wrestles with all his might with a strong man, who labours and exerts his utmost strength to gain a conquest over him.

2. From what Christ himself says of it, who was not wont to magnify things beyond the truth. He says, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." Matt. 26:38. What language can more strongly express the most extreme degree of sorrow? His soul was not only "sorrowful," but "exceeding sorrowful;" and not only so, but because that did not fully express the degree of his sorrow, he adds, "even unto death;" which seems to intimate that the very pains and sorrows of hell, of eternal death, had got hold upon him. The Hebrews were wont to express the utmost degree of sorrow that any creature could be liable to by the phrase, the shadow of death. Christ had now, as it were, the shadow of death brought over his soul by the near view which he had of that bitter cup that was now set before him.

3. From the effect which it had on his body, in causing that bloody sweat that we read of in the text. In our translation it is said, that "his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, falling down to the ground." The word rendered great drops, is in the original *qromboi*, which properly signifies lumps or clots; for we may suppose that the blood that was pressed out through the pores of his skin by the violence of that inward struggle and conflict that there was, when it came to be exposed to the cool air of the night, congealed and stiffened, as is the nature of blood, and so fell off from him not in drops, but in clots. If the suffering of Christ had occasioned merely a violent sweat, it would have shown that he was in great agony; for it must be an extraordinary grief and exercise of mind that causes the body to be all of a sweat abroad in the open air, in a cold night as that was, as is evident from John 18:18. "And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals, (for it was cold,) and they warmed themselves; and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself." This was the same night in which Christ had his agony in the garden. But Christ's inward distress and grief was not merely such as caused him to be in a violent and universal sweat, but such as caused him to sweat blood. The distress and anguish of his mind was so unspeakably extreme as to force his blood through the pores of his skin, and that so plentifully as to fall in great clots or drops from his body to the ground. I come now to show,

IV. What may be supposed to be the special end of God's giving Christ beforehand these terrible views of his last sufferings; in other words, why it was needful that he should have a more full and extraordinary view of the cup that he was to drink, a little before he drank it, than ever he had before; or why he must have such a foretaste of the wrath of God to be endured on the cross, before the time came that he was

actually to endure it.

Answer. It was needful, in order that he might take the cup and drink it, as knowing what he did. Unless the human nature of Christ had had an extraordinary view given him beforehand of what he was to suffer, he could not, as man, fully know beforehand what he was going to suffer, and therefore could not, as man, know what he did when he took the cup to drink it, because he would not fully have known what the cup was--it being a cup that he never drank before. If Christ had plunged himself into those dreadful sufferings, without being fully sensible beforehand of their bitterness and dreadfulness, he must have done he knew not what.

As man, he would have plunged himself into sufferings of the amount of which he was ignorant, and so have acted blindfold; and of course his taking upon him these sufferings could not have been so fully his own act. Christ, as God, perfectly knew what these sufferings were; but it was more needful also that he should know as man; for he was to suffer as man, and the act of Christ in taking that cup was the act of Christ as God man. But the man Christ Jesus hitherto never had had experience of any such sufferings as he was now to endure on the cross; and therefore he could not fully know what they were beforehand, but by having an extraordinary view of them set before him, and an extraordinary sense of them impressed on his mind.

We have heard of tortures that others have undergone, but we do not fully know what they were, because we never experienced them; and it is impossible that we should fully know what they were but in one of these two ways, either by experiencing them, or by having a view given of them, or a sense of them impressed in an extraordinary way. Such a sense was impressed on the mind of the man Christ Jesus, in the garden of Gethsemane, of his last sufferings, and that caused his agony.

When he had a full sight given him what that wrath of God was that he was to suffer, the sight was overwhelming to him; it made his soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Christ was going to be cast into a dreadful furnace of wrath, and it was not proper that he should plunge himself into it blindfold, as not knowing how dreadful the furnace was. Therefore that he might not do so, God first brought him and set him at the mouth of the furnace, that he might look in, and stand and view its fierce and raging flames, and might see where he was going, and might voluntarily enter into it and bear it for sinners, as knowing what it was.

This view Christ had in his agony. Then God brought the cup that he was to drink, and set it down before him, that he might have a full view of it, and see what it was before he took it and drank it. If Christ had not fully known what the dreadfulness of these sufferings was, before he took them upon him, his taking them upon him could not have been fully his own act as man; there could have been no explicit act of his will about that which he was ignorant of; there could have been no proper trial, whether he would be willing to undergo such dreadful sufferings or not, unless he had known beforehand how dreadful they were; but when he had seen what they were, by having an extraordinary view given him of them, and then undertaken to endure them afterwards; then he acted as knowing what he did; then his taking that cup, and bearing such dreadful sufferings, was properly his own act by an explicit choice; and so his love to sinners, in that choice of his, was the more wonderful, as also his obedience to God in it.

And it was necessary that this extraordinary view that Christ had of the cup he was to drink should be given at that time, just before he was apprehended. This was the most proper season for it, just before he took the cup, and while he yet had opportunity to refuse the cup; for before he was apprehended by the

company led by Judas, he had opportunity to make his escape at pleasure. For the place where he was, was without the city, where he was not at all confined, and was a lonesome, solitary place; and it was the night season; so that he might have gone from that place where he would, and his enemies not have known where to have found him.

This view that he had of the bitter cup was given him while he was yet fully at liberty, before he was given into the hands of his enemies. Christ's delivering himself up into the hands of his enemies, as he did when Judas came, which was just after his agony, was properly his act of taking the cup in order to drink; for Christ knew that the issue of that would be his crucifixion the next day. These things may show us the end of Christ's agony, and the necessity there was of such an agony before his last sufferings.

APPLICATION.

1. Hence we may learn how dreadful Christ's last sufferings were. We learn it from the dreadful effect which the bare foresight of them had upon him in his agony. His last sufferings were so dreadful, that the view which Christ had of them before overwhelmed him and amazed him, as it is said he began to be sore amazed. The very sight of these last sufferings was so very dreadful as to sink his soul down into the dark shadow of death; yea, so dreadful was it, that in the sore conflict which his nature had with it, he was all in a sweat of blood, his body all over was covered with clotted blood, and not only his body, but the very ground under him with the blood that fell from him, which had been forced through his pores through the violence of his agony. And if only the foresight of the cup was so dreadful, how dreadful was the cup itself, how far beyond all that can be uttered or conceived! Many of the martyrs have endured extreme tortures, but from what has been said, there is all reason to think those all were a mere nothing to the last sufferings of Christ on the cross. And what has been said affords a convincing argument that the sufferings which Christ endured in his body on the cross, though they were very dreadful, were yet the least part of his last sufferings; and that beside those, he endured sufferings in his soul which were vastly greater. For if it had been only the sufferings which he endured in his body, though they were very dreadful, we cannot conceive that the mere anticipation of them would have such an effect on Christ. Many of the martyrs, for ought we know, have endured as severe tortures in their bodies as Christ did. Many of the martyrs have been crucified, as Christ was; and yet their souls have not been so overwhelmed. There has been no appearance of such amazing sorrow and distress of mind either at the anticipation of their sufferings, or in the actual enduring of them.

2. From what has been said, we may see the wonderful strength of the love of Christ to sinners. What has been said shows the strength of Christ's love two ways.

1. That it was so strong as to carry him through that agony that he was then in. The suffering that he then was actually subject to, was dreadful and amazing, as has been shown; and how wonderful was his love that lasted and was upheld still! The love of any mere man or angel would doubtless have sunk under such a weight, and never would have endured such a conflict in such a bloody sweat as that of Jesus Christ. The anguish of Christ's soul at that time was so strong as to cause that wonderful effect on his body. But his love to his enemies, poor and unworthy as they were, was stronger still. The heart of Christ at that time was full of distress, but it was fuller of love to vile worms: his sorrows abounded, but his love did much more abound. Christ's soul was overwhelmed with a deluge of grief, but this was from a deluge of love to sinners in his heart sufficient to overflow the world, and overwhelm the highest mountains of its sins. Those great drops of blood that fell down to the ground were a manifestation of an ocean of love in Christ's heart.

2. The strength of Christ's love more especially appears in this, that when he had such a full view of the dreadfulness of the cup that he was to drink, that so amazed him, he would notwithstanding even then take it up, and drink it. Then seems to have been the greatest and most peculiar trial of the strength of the love of Christ, when God set down the bitter portion before him, and let him see what he had to drink, if he persisted in his love to sinners; and brought him to the mouth of the furnace that he might see its fierceness, and have a full view of it, and have time then to consider whether he would go in and suffer the flames of this furnace for such unworthy creatures, or not.

This was as it were proposing it to Christ's last consideration what he would do; as much as if it had then been said to him, 'Here is the cup that you are to drink, unless you will give up your undertaking for sinners, and even leave them to perish as they deserve. Will you take this cup, and drink it for them, or not? There is the furnace into which you are to be cast, if they are to be saved; either they must perish, or you must endure this for them. There you see how terrible the heat of the furnace is; you see what pain and anguish you must endure on the morrow, unless you give up the cause of sinners.

What will you do? is your love such that you will go on? Will you cast yourself into this dreadful furnace of wrath?' Christ's soul was overwhelmed with the thought; his feeble human nature shrunk at the dismal sight. It put him into this dreadful agony which you have heard described; but his love to sinners held out. Christ would not undergo these sufferings needlessly, if sinners could be saved without. If there was not an absolute necessity of his suffering them in order to their salvation, he desired that the cup might pass from him.

But if sinners, on whom he had set his love, could not, agreeably to the will of God, be saved without his drinking it, he chose that the will of God should be done. He chose to go on and endure the suffering, awful as it appeared to him. And this was his final conclusion, after the dismal conflict of his poor feeble human nature, after he had had the cup in view, and for at least the space of one hour, had seen how amazing it was. Still he finally resolved that he would bear it, rather than those poor sinners whom he had loved from all eternity should perish.

When the dreadful cup was before him, he did not say within himself, why should I, who am so great and glorious a person, infinitely more honourable than all the angels of heaven, Why should I go to plunge myself into such dreadful, amazing torments for worthless wretched worms that cannot be profitable to God, or me, and that deserve to be hated by me, and not to be loved? Why should I, who have been living from all eternity in the enjoyment of the Father's love, go to cast myself into such a furnace for them that never can requite me for it?

Why should I yield myself to be thus crushed by the weight of divine wrath, for them who have no love to me, and are my enemies? they do not deserve any union with me, and never did, and never will do, any thing to recommend themselves to me. What shall I be the richer for having saved a number of miserable haters of God and me, who deserve to have divine justice glorified in their destruction? Such, however, was not the language of Christ's heart, in these circumstances; but on the contrary, his love held out, and he resolved even then, in the midst of his agony, to yield himself up to the will of God, and to take the cup and drink it.

He would not flee to get out of the way of Judas and those that were with him, though he knew they were coming, but that same hour delivered himself voluntarily into their hands. When they came with swords and staves to apprehend him, and he could have called upon his Father, who would immediately have

sent many legions of angels to repel his enemies, and have delivered him, he would not do it; and when his disciples would have made resistance, he would not suffer them, as you may see in Matt. 26:51, and onward: "And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear.

Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he will presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.

But all this was done that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." And Christ, instead of hiding himself from Judas and the soldiers, told them, when they seemed to be at a loss whether he was the person whom they sought; and when they seemed still somewhat to hesitate, being seized with some terror in their minds, he told them so again, and so yielded himself up into their hands, to be bound by them, after he had shown them that he could easily resist them if he pleased, when a single word spoken by him, threw them backwards to the ground, as you may see in John 18:3, etc.

"Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns, and torches, and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said unto them, I am he. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground." Thus powerful, constant, and violent was the love of Christ; and the special trial of his love above all others in his whole life seems to have been in the time of his agony.

For though his sufferings were greater afterwards, when he was on the cross, yet he saw clearly what those sufferings were to be, in the time of his agony; and that seems to have been the first time that ever Christ Jesus had a clear view what these sufferings were; and after this the trial was not so great, because the conflict was over. His human nature had been in a struggle with his love to sinners, but his love had got the victory. The thing, upon a full view of his sufferings, had been resolved on and concluded; and accordingly, when the moment arrived, he actually went through with those sufferings.

But there are two circumstances of Christ's agony that do still make the strength and constancy of his love to sinners the more conspicuous.

1. That at the same time that he had such a view of the dreadfulness of his sufferings, he had also an extraordinary view of the hatefulness of the wickedness of those for whom those sufferings were to make atonement. There are two things that render Christ's love wonderful: 1. That he should be willing to endure sufferings that were so great; and 2. That he should be willing to endure them to make atonement for wickedness that was so great. But in order to its being properly said, Christ of his own act and choice endured sufferings that were so great, to make atonement for wickedness that was so great, two things were necessary. 1. That he should have an extraordinary sense how great these sufferings were to be, before he endured them. This was given in his agony. And 2. That he should also at the same time have an extraordinary sense how great and hateful was the wickedness of men for which he suffered to make atonement; or how unworthy those were for whom he died. And both these were given at the same time. When Christ had such an extraordinary sense how bitter his cup was to be, he had much to make him sensible how unworthy and hateful that wickedness of mankind was for which he suffered; because the

hateful and malignant nature of that corruption never appeared more fully than in the spite and cruelty of men in these sufferings; and yet his love was such that he went on notwithstanding to suffer for them who were full of such hateful corruption.

It was the corruption and wickedness of men that contrived and effected his death; it was the wickedness of men that agreed with Judas, it was the wickedness of men that betrayed him, and that apprehended him, and bound him, and led him away like a malefactor; it was by men's corruption and wickedness that he was arraigned, and falsely accused, and unjustly judged. It was by men's wickedness that he was reproached, mocked, buffeted, and spit upon. It was by men's wickedness that Barabbas was preferred before him. It was men's wickedness that laid the cross upon him to bear, and that nailed him to it, and put him to so cruel and ignominious a death. This tended to give Christ an extraordinary sense of the greatness and hatefulness of the depravity of mankind.

1. Because hereby in the time of his sufferings he had that depravity set before him as it is, without disguise. When it killed Christ, it appeared in its proper colours. Here Christ saw it in its true nature, which is the utmost hatred and contempt of God; in its ultimate tendency and desire, which is to kill God; and in its greatest aggravation and highest act, which is killing a person that was God.

2. Because in these sufferings he felt the fruits of that wickedness. It was then directly levelled against himself, and exerted itself against him to work his reproach and torment, which tended to impress a stronger sense of its hatefulness on the human nature of Christ. But yet at the same time, so wonderful was the love of Christ to those who exhibited this hateful corruption, that he endured those very sufferings to deliver them from the punishment of that very corruption. The wonderfulness of Christ's dying love appears partly in that he died for those that were so unworthy in themselves, as all mankind have the same kind of corruptions in their hearts, and partly in that he died for those who were not only so wicked, but whose wickedness consists in being enemies to him; so that he did not only die for the wicked, but for his own enemies; and partly in that he was willing to die for his enemies at the same time that he was feeling the fruits of their enmity, while he felt the utmost effects and exertions of their spite against him in the greatest possible contempt and cruelty towards him in his own greatest ignominy, torments, and death; and partly in that he was willing to atone for their being his enemies in these very sufferings, and by that very ignominy, torment, and death that was the fruit of it. The sin and wickedness of men, for which Christ suffered to make atonement, was, as it were, set before Christ in his view.

1. In that this wickedness was but a sample of the wickedness of mankind; for the corruption of all mankind is of the same nature, and the wickedness that is in one man's heart is of the same nature and tendency as in another's. As in water, face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.

2. It is probable that Christ died to make atonement for that individual actual wickedness that wrought his sufferings, that reproached, mocked, buffeted, and crucified him. Some of his crucifiers, for whom he prayed that they might be forgiven, while they were in the very act of crucifying him, were afterwards, in answer to his prayer, converted, by the preaching of Peter; as we have an account of in the 2d chapter of Acts.

2. Another circumstance of Christ's agony that shows the strength of his love, is the ungrateful carriage of his disciples at that time. Christ's disciples were among those for whom he endured this agony, and among those for whom he was going to endure those last sufferings, of which he now had such dreadful apprehensions. Yet Christ had already given them an interest in the benefits of those sufferings. Their sins

had already been forgiven them through that blood that he was going to shed, and they had been infinite gainers already by that dying pity and love which he had to them, and had through his sufferings been distinguished from all the world besides. Christ had put greater honour upon them than any other, by making them his disciples in a more honourable sense than he had done any other. And yet now, when he had that dreadful cup set before him which he was going to drink for them, and was in such an agony at the sight of it, he saw no return on their part but indifference and ingratitude. When he only desired them to watch with him, that he might be comforted in their company, now at this sorrowful moment they fell asleep; and showed that they had not concern enough about it to induce them to keep awake with him even for one hour, though he desired it of them once and again. But yet this ungrateful treatment of theirs, for whom he was to drink the cup of wrath which God had set before him, did not discourage him from taking it, and drinking it for them. His love held out to them; having loved his own, he loved them to the end. He did not say within himself when this cup of trembling was before him, Why should I endure so much for those that are so ungrateful; why should I here wrestle with the expectation of the terrible wrath of God to be borne by me to-morrow, for them that in the mean time have not so much concern for me as to keep awake with me when I desire it of them even for one hour? But on the contrary, with tender and fatherly compassions he excuses this ingratitude of his disciples, and says, Matt. 26:41. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak;" and went and was apprehended, and mocked, and scourged, and crucified, and poured out his soul unto death, under the heavy weight of God's dreadful wrath on the cross for them.

3d Inference. From what has been said, we may learn the wonderfulness of Christ's submission to the will of God. Christ, as he was a divine person, was the absolute sovereign of heaven and earth, but yet he was the most wonderful instance of submission to God's sovereignty that ever was. When he had such a view of the terribleness of his last sufferings, and prayed if it were possible that that cup might pass from him, i.e. if there was not an absolute necessity of it in order to the salvation of sinners, yet it was with a perfect submission to the will of God. He adds, "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." He chose rather that the inclination of his human nature, which so much dreaded such exquisite torments, should be crossed, than that God's will should not take place. He delighted in the thought of God's will being done; and when he went and prayed the second time, he had nothing else to say but, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done;" and so the third time. What are such trials of submission as any of us sometimes have in the afflictions that we suffer in comparison of this? If God does but in his providence signify it to be his will that we should part with a child, how hardly are we brought to yield to it, how ready to be unsubmissive and froward! Or if God lays his hand upon us in some acute pain of body, how ready are we to be discontented and impatient; when the innocent Son of God, who deserved no suffering could quietly submit to sufferings inconceivably great, and say it over and over, God's will be done! When he was brought and set before that dreadful furnace of wrath into which he was to be cast, in order that he might look into it and have a full view of its fierceness, when his flesh shrunk at it, and his nature was in such a conflict, that his body was all covered with a sweat of blood falling in great drops to the ground, yet his soul quietly yielded that the will of God should be done, rather than the will or inclination of his human nature.

4th Infer. What has been said on this subject also shows us the glory of Christ's obedience. Christ was subject to the moral law as Adam was, and he was also subject to the ceremonial and judicial laws of Moses; but the principal command that he had received of the Father was, that he should lay down his life, that he should voluntarily yield up himself to those terrible sufferings on the cross. To do this was his principal errand into the world; and doubtless the principal command that he received, was about that

which was the principal errand on which he was sent.

The Father, when he sent him into the world, sent him with commands concerning what he should do in the world; and his chief command of all was about that, which was the errand he was chiefly sent upon, which was to lay down his life. And therefore this command was the principal trial of his obedience. It was the greatest trial of his obedience, because it was by far the most difficult command: all the rest were easy in comparison of this. And the main trial that Christ had, whether he would obey this command, was in the time of his agony; for that was within an hour before he was apprehended in order to his sufferings, when he must either yield himself up to them, or fly from them.

And then it was the first time that Christ had a full view of the difficulty of this command; which appeared so great as to cause that bloody sweat. Then was the conflict of weak human nature with the difficulty, then was the sore struggles and wrestling with the heavy trial he had, and then Christ got the victory over the temptation, from the dread of his human nature. His obedience held out through the conflict. Then we may suppose that Satan was especially let loose to set in with the natural dread that the human nature had of such torments, and to strive to his utmost to dissuade Christ from going on to drink the bitter cup; for about that time, towards the close of Christ's life, was he especially delivered up into the hands of Satan to be tempted of him, more than he was immediately after his baptism; for Christ says, speaking of that time, Luke 22:53.

"When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me; but this is your hour, and the power of darkness." So that Christ, in the time of his agony, was wrestling not only with overwhelming views of his last sufferings, but he also wrestled, in that bloody sweat, with principalities and powers -- he contended at that time with the great leviathan that laboured to his utmost to tempt him to disobedience. So that then Christ had temptations every way to draw him off from obedience to God.

He had temptations from his feeble human nature, that exceedingly dreaded such torments; and he had temptations from men, who were his enemies; and he had temptations from the ungrateful carriage of his own disciples; and he had temptations from the devil. He had also an overwhelming trial from the manifestation of God's own wrath; when, in the words of Isaiah, it pleased the Lord to bruise him and put him to grief. But yet he failed not, but got the victory over all, and performed that great act of obedience at that time to that same God that hid himself from him, and was showing his wrath to him for men's sins, which he must presently suffer.

Nothing could move him away from his steadfast obedience to God, but he persisted in saying, "Thy will be done:" expressing not only his submission, but his obedience; not only his compliance with the disposing will of God, but also with his perceptive will. God had given him this cup to drink, and had commanded him to drink it, and that was reason enough with him to drink it; hence he says, at the conclusion of his agony, when Judas came with his band, "The cup which my Father giveth me to drink, shall I not drink it?"

John 18:11. Christ, at the time of his agony, had an inconceivably greater trial of obedience than any man or any angel ever had. How much was this trial of the obedience of the second Adam beyond the trial of the obedience of the first Adam! How light was our first father's temptation in comparison of this! And yet our first surety failed, and our second failed not, but obtained a glorious victory, and went and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Thus wonderful and glorious was the obedience of Christ, by which he wrought out righteousness for believers, and which obedience is imputed to them. No

wonder that it is a sweet penalty sown, and that God stands ready to bestow heaven as its reward on all that believe on him.

5. What has been said shows us the sottishness of secure sinners in being so fearless of the wrath of God. If the wrath of God was so dreadful, that, when Christ only expected it, his human nature was nearly overwhelmed with the fear of it, and his soul was amazed, and his body all over in a bloody sweat; then how sottish are sinners, who are under the threatening of the same wrath of God, and are condemned to it, and are every moment exposed to it; and yet, instead of manifesting intense apprehension, are quiet and easy, and unconcerned; instead of being sorrowful and very heavy, go about with a light and careless heart; instead of crying out in bitter agony, are often gay and cheerful, and eat and drink, and sleep quietly, and go on in sin, provoking the wrath of God more and more, without any great matter of concern! How stupid and sottish are such persons! Let such senseless sinners consider, that that misery, of which they are in danger from the wrath of God, is infinitely more terrible than that, the fear of which occasioned in Christ his agony and bloody sweat. It is more terrible, both as it differs both in its nature and degree, and also as it differs in its duration. It is more terrible in its nature and degree. Christ suffered that which, as it upheld the honour of the divine law, was fully equivalent to the misery of the damned; and in some respect it was the same suffering; for it was the wrath of the same God; but yet in other respects it vastly differed. The difference does not arise from the difference in the wrath poured out on one and the other, for it is the same wrath, but from the difference of the subject, which may be best illustrated from Christ's own comparison. Luke 23:31. "For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" Here he calls himself the green tree, and wicked men the dry, intimating that the misery that will come on wicked men will be far more dreadful than those sufferings which came on him, and the difference arises from the different nature of the subject. The green tree and the dry are both cast into the fire; but the flames seize and kindle on the dry tree much more fiercely than on the green. The sufferings that Christ endured differ from the misery of the wicked in hell in nature and degree in the following respects.

1. Christ felt not the gnawings of a guilty, condemning conscience.

2. He felt no torment from the reigning of inward corruptions and lusts as the damned do. The wicked in hell are their own tormentors, their lusts are their tormentors, and being without restraint, (for there is no restraining grace in hell,) their lusts will rage like raging flames in their hearts. They shall be tormented with the unrestrained violence of a spirit of envy and malice against God, and against the angels and saints in heaven, and against one another. Now Christ suffered nothing of this.

3. Christ had not to consider that God hated him. The wicked in hell have this to make their misery perfect, they know that God perfectly hates them without the least pity or regard to them, which will fill their souls with inexpressible misery. But it was not so with Christ. God withdrew his comfortable presence from Christ, and hid his face from him, and so poured out his wrath upon him, as made him feel its terrible effects in his soul; but yet he knew at the same time that God did not hate him, but infinitely loved him. He cried out of God's forsaking him, but yet at the same time calls him "My God, my God!" knowing that he was his God still, though he had forsaken him. But the wicked in hell will know that he is not their God, but their judge and irreconcilable enemy.

4. Christ did not suffer despair, as the wicked do in hell. He knew that there would be an end to his sufferings in a few hours; and that after that he should enter into eternal glory. But it will be far otherwise with you that are impenitent; if you die in your present condition, you will be in perfect despair. On these accounts, the misery of the wicked in hell will be immensely more dreadful in nature and degree, than

those sufferings with the fears of which Christ's soul was so much overwhelmed.

2. It will infinitely differ in duration. Christ's sufferings lasted but a few hours, and there was an eternal end to them, and eternal glory succeeded. But you that are a secure, senseless sinner, are every day exposed to be cast into everlasting misery, a fire that never shall be quenched. If then the Son of God was in such amazement, in the expectation of what he was to suffer for a few hours, how sottish are you who are continually exposed to sufferings, immensely more dreadful in nature and degree, and that are to be without any end, but which must be endured without any rest day or night for ever and ever! If you had a full sense of the greatness of that misery to which you are exposed, and how dreadful your present condition is on that account, it would this moment put you into as dreadful an agony as that which Christ underwent; yea, if your nature could endure it, one much more dreadful. We should now see you fall down in a bloody sweat, wallowing in your gore, and crying out in terrible amazement.

Having thus endeavoured to explain and illustrate the former of the two propositions mentioned in the commencement of this discourse, I shall now proceed to show,

II. That the soul of Christ in his agony in the garden was in a great and earnest strife and conflict in his prayer to God. The labour and striving of Christ's soul in prayer was a part of his agony, and was without doubt a part of what is intended in the text, when it is said that Christ was in an agony; for, as we have shown, the word is especially used in Scripture in other places for striving or wrestling with God in prayer. From this fact, and from the evangelist mentioning his being in agony, and his praying earnestly in the same sentence, we may well understand him as mentioning his striving in prayer as part of his agony. The words of the text seem to hold forth as much as that Christ was in an agony in prayer: "Being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground." This language seems to imply thus much, that the labour and earnestness of Christ's soul was so great in his wrestling with God in prayer, that he was in a mere agony, and all over in a sweat of blood.

What I propose now, in this second proposition, is by the help of God to explain this part of Christ's agony which consisted in the agonizing and wrestling of his soul in prayer; which is the more worthy of a particular inquiry, being that which probably is but little understood; though, as may appear in the sequel, the right understanding of it is of great use and consequence in divinity. It is not as I conceive ordinarily well understood what is meant when it is said in the text that Christ prayed more earnestly; or what was the thing that he wrestled with God for, or what was the subject matter of this earnest prayer, or what was the reason of his being so very earnest in prayer at this time. And therefore, to set this whole matter in a clear light, I would particularly inquire,

1. Of what nature this prayer was;
2. What was the subject matter of this earnest prayer of Christ to the Father;
3. In what capacity Christ offered up this prayer to God;
4. Why he was so earnest in his prayer;
5. What was the success of this his earnest wrestling with God in prayer; and then make some improvement.

I. Of what nature this prayer of Christ was.

Addresses that are made to God may be of various kinds. Some are confessions on the part of the individual, or expressions of his sense of his own unworthiness before God, and are thus penitential addresses to God. Others are doxologies or prayers intended to express the sense which the person has of God's greatness and glory. Such are many of the psalms of David. Others are gratulatory addresses, or expressions of thanksgiving and praise for mercies received. Others are submissive addresses, or expressions of submission and resignation to the will of God, whereby he that addresses the Majesty of heaven, expresses the compliance of his will with the sovereign will of God; saying, "Thy will, O Lord, be done!" as David, 2 Sam. 15:26. "But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I; let him do to me as seemeth good unto him." Others are petitory or supplicatory; whereby the person that prays, begs of God and cries to him for some favour desired of him.

Hence the inquiry is, of which of these kinds was the prayer of Christ, that we read of in the text.

Answer. It was chiefly supplicatory. It was not penitential or confessional; for Christ had no sin or unworthiness to confess. Nor was it a doxology or a thanksgiving or merely an expression of submission; for none of these agree with what is said in the text, viz. that he prayed more earnestly. When any one is said to pray earnestly, it implies an earnest request for some benefit, or favour desired; and not merely a confession, or submission, or gratulation. So what the apostle says of this prayer, in Heb. 5:7. "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," shows that it was petitory, or an earnest supplication for some desired benefit. They are not confessions, or doxologies, or thanksgivings, or resignations, that are called "supplications" and "strong cyings," but petitions for some benefit earnestly desired. And having thus resolved the first inquiry, and shown that this earnest prayer of Christ -was of the nature of a supplication for some benefit or favour which Christ earnestly desired, I come to inquire,

II. What was the subject matter of this supplication; or what favour and benefit that was for which Christ so earnestly supplicated in this prayer of which we have an account in the text. Now the words of the text are not express on this matter. It is said that Christ, "being in an agony, prayed more earnestly;" but yet it is not said what he prayed so earnestly for. And here is the greatest difficulty attending this account: even what that was which Christ so earnestly desired, for which he so wrestled with God at that time. And though we are not expressly told in the text, yet the Scriptures have not left us without sufficient light in this matter. And the more effectually to avoid mistakes, I would answer,

1. Negatively, the thing that Christ so earnestly prayed for at this time, was not that the bitter cup which he had to drink might pass from him. Christ had before prayed for this, as in the next verse but one before the text, saying "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me! nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done!" It is after this that we have an account that Christ being in an agony, prayed more earnestly; but we are not to understand that he prayed more earnestly than he had done before, that the cup might pass from him. That this was not the thing that he so earnestly prayed for in this second prayer, the following things seem to prove:

1. This second prayer was after the angel had appeared to him from heaven, strengthening him, the more cheerfully to take the cup and drink it. The evangelists inform us that when Christ came into the garden, he began to be sorrowful, and very heavy, and that he said his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, and that then he went and prayed to God, that if it were possible the cup might pass from him. Luke says in the 41st and 42nd verses, "that being withdrawn from his disciples about a stone's cast, he kneeled down and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not

my will, but thine be done!" And then, after this, it is said in the next verse, that there appeared an angel from heaven unto him strengthening him. Now this can be understood no otherwise than that the angel appeared to him, strengthening him and encouraging him to go through his great and difficult work, to take the cup and drink it. Accordingly we must suppose, that now Christ was more strengthened and encouraged to go through with his sufferings: and therefore we cannot suppose that after this he would pray more earnestly than before to be delivered from his sufferings; and of course that it was something else that Christ more earnestly prayed for, after that strengthening of the angel, and not that the cup might pass from him. Though Christ seems to have a greater sight of his sufferings given him after this strengthening of the angel than before, that caused such an agony, yet he was more strengthened to fit him for a greater sight of them, he had greater strength and courage to grapple with these awful apprehensions, than before. His strength to bear sufferings is increased with the sense of his sufferings.

2. Christ, before his second prayer, had had an intimation from the Father, that it was not his will that the cup should pass from him. The angel's coming from heaven to strengthen him must be so understood. Christ first prays, that if it may be the will of the Father, the cup might pass; but not, if it was not his will; and then God immediately upon this sends an angel to strengthen, and encourage him to take the cup, which was a plain intimation to Christ that it was the Father's will that he should take it, and that it should not pass from him. And so Christ received it; as appears from the account which Matthew gives of this second prayer. Matt. 26:42. "He went away again the 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." He speaks as one that now had had an intimation, since he prayed before, that it was not the will of God. And Luke tells us how, viz. by God's sending an angel. Matthew informs us, as Luke does, that in his first prayer, he prayed that if it were possible the cup might pass from him; but then God sends an angel to signify that it was not his will, and to encourage him to take it. And then Christ having received this plain intimation that it was not the will of God that the cup should pass from him, yields to the message he had received, and says, O my Father, if it be so as thou hast now signified, thy will be done. Therefore we may surely conclude that what Christ prayed more earnestly for after this, was not that the cup might pass from him, but something else; for he would not go to pray more earnestly that the cup might pass from him, after God had signified that it was not his will that it should pass from him, than he did before; that would be blasphemous to suppose. And then,

3dly, The language of the second prayer, as recited by Matthew, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done," shows that Christ did not then pray that the cup might pass from him. This certainly is not praying more earnestly that the cup might pass: it is rather a yielding that point, and ceasing any more to urge it, and submitting to it as a thing now determined by the will of God, made known by the angel. And,

4. From the apostle's account of this prayer in the 5th ch. of Hebrews, the words of the apostle are these, "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up his 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." The strong crying and tears of which the apostle speaks, are doubtless the same that Luke speaks of in the text, when he says, "he being in an agony, prayed more earnestly;" for this was the sharpest and most earnest crying of Christ, of which we have any where any account. But according to the apostle's account, that which Christ feared, and that for which he so strongly cried to God in this prayer, was something that he was heard in, something that God granted him his request in, and therefore it was not that the cup might pass from him. Having thus shown what it was not that Christ prayed for in this earnest prayer, I proceed to show,

2nd, What it was that Christ so earnestly sought of God in this prayer.

I answer in one word, it was, That God's will might be done, in what related to his sufferings. Matthew gives this express account of it, in the very language of the prayer which has been recited several times already, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done!" This is a yielding, and an expression of submission; but it is not merely that. Such words, "The will of the Lord be done," as they are most commonly used, are not understood as a supplication or request, but only as an expression of submission. But the words are not always to be understood in that sense in Scripture, but sometimes are to be understood as a request. So they are to be understood in the third petition of the Lord's prayer, "Thy will be done in earth as in heaven." There the words are to be understood both as an expression of submission, and also a request, as they are explained in the Assembly's Catechism, and so the words are to be understood here. The evangelist Mark says that Christ went away again and spake the same words that he had done in his first prayer. Mark 14:39. But then we must understand it as of the same words with the latter part of his first prayer, "nevertheless not my will but thine be done," as Matthew's more full and particular account shows. So that the thing mentioned in the text, for which Christ was wrestling with God in this prayer, was, that God's will might be done in what related to his sufferings.

But then here another inquiry may arise, viz. What is implied in Christ's praying that God's will might be done in what related to his sufferings? To this I answer,

1. This implies a request that he might be strengthened and supported, and enabled to do God's will, by going through with these sufferings. The same as when he says, "Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God." It was the preceptive will of God that he should take that cup and drink it: it was the Father's command to him. The Father had given him the cup, and as it were set it down before him with the command that he should drink it. This was the greatest act of obedience that Christ was to perform. He prays for strength and help, that his poor feeble human nature might be supported, that he might not fail in this great trial, that he might not sink and be swallowed up, and his strength so overcome that he should not hold out, and finish the appointed obedience. This was the thing that he feared, of which the apostle speaks in the 5th of Hebrews, when he says, "he was heard in that he feared." When he had such an extraordinary sense of the dreadfulness of his sufferings impressed on his mind, the fearfulness of it amazed him. He was afraid lest his poor feeble strength should be overcome, and that he should fail in so great a trial, that he should be swallowed up by that death that he was to die, and so should not be saved from death; and therefore he offered up strong crying and tears unto him that was able to strengthen him, and support, and save him from death, that the death he was to suffer might not overcome his love and obedience, but that he might overcome death, and so be saved from it. If Christ's courage had failed in the trial, and he had not held out under his dying sufferings, he never would have been saved from death, but he would have sunk in the deep mire; he never would have risen from the dead, for his rising from the dead was a reward of his victory. If his courage had failed, and he had given up, he woul

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