

Gethsemane

by Robert Cummins

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CHAPTER FIVE

At the sight of Gethsemane's cup, the Son cried out to His Father, "Oh, Father, never has anything unclean or unholy touched my life! Never has anything evil been able to come near My soul! How can I now take into My holy being this cup of the abominations of iniquity? Let it pass from me! Yet not My will, but Thine be done." CHRIST was but giving expression to the unspeakable loathings and anguish that sin causes in the soul of GOD the Father, GOD the Son, and GOD the HOLY SPIRIT. If you would know what sin costs GOD, linger in Gethsemane.

What was the Father's response to the anguished plea of the Son of His love? Was there conflict between the will of the Father and the will of the Son? Was the Son's prayer, struggle, and revolt against the hour and against the cup, a revelation of something that was not divine? An expression of a will in opposition to or differing from the will of the Father? How shall we interpret the prayer and the rising of our Lord from the place of struggle?

The Spirit mentioned it to me thus: There was no opposition in the will of JESUS to the will of the Father. "**He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father,**" was just as true in Gethsemane as in any other scene of our Lord's life. "He who hath seen Me in Gethsemane hath seen My Father in Gethsemane. He who hath seen Me being crushed by the oil press hath seen My Father being crushed. He who hath seen Me torn and struggling in will, hath seen My Father's struggle of will. I and the Father were one in Gethsemane as in all things."

Sin caused a struggle in GOD's will. "Because of sin GOD repented that He had made man," shows that such a picture of conflict of will in GOD represents a reality that exists, even though it may not be comprehended. GOD has been greatly troubled -- is troubled by sin. So, in the garden, when His Son pleaded with Him to let the cup pass from Him, the Father consented.

They leave the place of anguish and struggle and crushing together. The loathing in the heart of the Son, His revolt against the cup of iniquity is a revelation of the Father's loathing and revolt. The Father is in perfect accord with the Son.

It is just as terrible to the holy Father to have His Son undergo such agony, to have Him whom He loves with infinite tenderness overwhelmed with such floods of horror and sorrow and iniquity, as it is for the Son Himself. Nothing could be more repulsive to GOD. No place for sin can be found in the holy nature of the Son -- neither can any place for sin be found in the holy nature of the Father.

When the Son says, "Father, ABBA Father, beloved Father, the cup of sin and iniquity is too abominable to drink, the hour is too horrible to endure," the Father replies, "Yes, My beloved One, sin is infinitely repulsive. No necessity or compulsion will ever make Thee drink the cup. Arise, let us go."

So they leave the cup of horror behind and start away from the place of the crushing. They come to the three loved disciples and find them sleeping for sorrow. The Father makes as though He would go on. The Son stops. "Father, we cannot leave Peter and James and John in this place of darkness and crushing. Are we going to leave our loved disciples behind, those whom Thou gavest Me? Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to Me; and I have kept them safe so far in Thy name; and for their sakes I sanctified Myself. Am I to leave them now in Gethsemane?"

"But, My Son, that sin and iniquity which is so loathsome, so hateful, and so repulsive to us - that is their sin. It is in them. They all like sheep have gone astray. I was laying on Thee the iniquity of these men and all the world that they may be holy and without blemish before Me in love. We cannot bring them before the throne of Our glory while sin is in them. That sickness of sin in them must be destroyed. No power can destroy it and at the same time preserve the life of those who have sinned, except blood. No blood except Thine can accomplish this double work. They must have blood - blood to draw out and absorb and dispose of the awful poison of their uncleanness and iniquity. Sin's hold upon them is so strong that We cannot deliver them from Gethsemane's crushing until we break sin and destroy it; and sin is in them."

So JESUS looked upon the disciples, those whom He loved. Was His love for them able to endure this horror? The sin that faced Him in the garden, the cup of horror, was the sin of His loved ones, Peter and James and John, the cup of the corruption of Thomas, and Matthew, and Saul of Tarsus, and the profligate Augustine, and the "gutter rat," Jerry MacAuley. It was the corruption of the selfishness and impurity and meanness of mine and thine; and all these He loved unto the uttermost.

He had undertaken to make Simon into the unshakeable rock Peter. And Simon's weak, vacillating, selfish, boastful, impulsive nature stood in the way. With great desire He had desired to impart His own perfect nature to Simon. He was glad to be broken and poured out for Simon's sake, but to drink the cup of his corruption! Was that really necessary? Was there not some other way?

All things were possible to GOD; surely there was some other way to deal with the corrupt nature of man. Perhaps if He kept on setting a perfect example before His disciples, and continued with the godly instruction He had been giving them, perhaps that would be the solution.

But as He looked at them He realized that education had not been able to make the changes He so desired. The disciples were still weak and defeated. For three years the inner circle, Peter, James, and John, had been receiving such an education as none before or since had ever had. Day and night they had lived with the perfect example of the Son of GOD before them.

If example and education had been able to accomplish what GOD desired, then these three men would have been the proofs of their power. But at the time when the redemption of the world hung in the balance, the one time when the Master had called upon His disciples for their help, when all the powers of evil were arrayed against GOD and man to destroy forever and utterly the sons of men, not only the eight near the entrance to the garden, but the three upon whom CHRIST had spent His best efforts as teacher and example, were all fast asleep.

Depending upon their own loyalty and their own ability to stay true to their Lord, they thought they would be sufficient. But they were failures, defeated by sleep. Simon was still Simon. The Peter that CHRIST had foretold, had not yet come forth.

So JESUS turns to Peter and says, "Simon, sleepest thou? Couldest thou not watch one hour? Is this the result of all My patient efforts with you, of all My teaching, and of My life of fellowship? When I needed your sympathy and prayer, you could not even watch with me for a single hour? Watch and pray that sin may not overpower you. I know your spirit is willing, but your fleshly nature is weak."

He realized that for the sake of those whom He loved, the cup must be drunk. There was no way to remove the corruption from Simon, except by bringing Simon into vital union with Himself and drawing Simon's old and corrupt life into His own divine life stream, there to slay it with the power of His redeeming holiness. (See Matthew's account of the second prayer.)

So JESUS looked upon me in this world's Gethsemane. Could He endure to drink the cup for my sake?

Oh, my Lord and my GOD! I have watched Thee in the garden! I saw Thee look upon me, sleeping in blissful ignorance of the terrible forces that were battling for my soul; I saw Thee look with infinite loathing and horror upon the cup of iniquity; I saw Thee turn Thine eyes again toward me, and because Thou didst love me to the uttermost, I saw Thee look up into Thy Father's face and I heard Thee say, "Father, I see. There is no other way. There is no other blood. Except I drink this cup, We cannot deliver him from the crushing which will be his utter destruction. Father, I came to bring Thee to him, to make him a son of Thine, to reveal Thee as a Father to him. O Father, I love him with a great and everlasting love, and Thou, too, lovest him, Father. For the sake of the great love with which We love him We must endure the hour, We can drink the cup. For his sake I sanctified Myself, and for his sake I again sanctify Myself that he may be sanctified." Saying this, He returned to the cup and to the struggle.

How the Father must have loved us, that HE could look upon the agony of the Son and still not remove the hour or take away the cup, so that we might be redeemed! In the agony of a well-beloved, only begotten son a Father feels double agony. How greatly must the Father have desired to deliver the Son! How the cry of the Son must have wrung the heart of the Father!

Yet His desire and the Son's desire to bring us into His glory, and the great love wherewith He has loved us, are still greater than His desire to deliver the Son from the horror and agony of the cup. So together the Father and Son face the sorrow and anguish and dreadfulness of Gethsemane. The cup is accepted. The horror of great darkness, the awful suffering is faced again.

~ end of chapter 5 ~

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