

35. Went forward. "About a stone's cast," says Luke. **Fell on the ground.** "When the flail of affliction is upon me, let me not be the chaff that flies in thy face, but the corn that lies low at thy feet."—*Calvin*. **If it were possible.** If the great ends of redemption could be accomplished in any other way. **The hour might pass.** And all that the hour brought with it—the betrayal, the trial, the mocking, the scourging, the cross, the grave, and all else (much the larger part) which our thoughts cannot reach.

36. Abba, Father. "Abba" was a familiar endearing term for Father, comparable to our "papa"—only that it was a correct word in another language, the Aramaic, which the Jews talked before they learned Greek. Putting the two words together thus made a caressing affectionate phrase. **All things are possible.** So, then, nothing is possible to Judas or Caiaphas or Pilate that is not permitted by God. This thought, coupled with such love for God as finds expression in "Abba, Father," will calm and sustain any soul through any agony. **Take away this cup.** "In his human soul," says Alford, "he willed to be freed from the dreadful things before him; but this human will was overruled by the inner and divine purpose—the will at unity with the Father's will." **Not what I will, but what thou wilt.** This is the type of all true prayer. God gives us our human nature. When it rises clamorous for delight or against pain its clamor is not wrong, and we are justified in petitioning heavenly Love for the things we desire and for relief from the experiences we dread; but always we should pray with the proviso—"If thou be willing." (3) *Note in our great Exemplar's prayer:* 1.) *Its loveliness.* 2.) *Its directness.* 3.) *Its earnestness.* 4.) *Its trustfulness.* 5.) *Its submissiveness.*

37. Findeth them sleeping. Luke says, "sleeping for sorrow," that is, as a physical result of mental disturbance. Joy and sorrow both act as intoxicants—at first they excite, later they benumb and cause stupor. **Saith unto Peter.** The natural leader of the apostles. **Couldst not thou watch?** "Hast thou not strength even to watch—thou who but just now wert boasting?" **One hour.** Perhaps a limit more or less definite of the duration of the agony; or an allusion to the time, "one hour," as we would say, "one o'clock."

38. Watch ye and pray. (4) *Prayer without watching is hypocrisy; watching without prayer is presumption.*—*W. Jay*. **Enter into tempta-**

tion. "Let you place yourselves under the power of the tempter by your own neglect." **The spirit . . . is ready.** "Is willing" (Revised Version. See also Matt. 26. 41). **Flesh is weak.** A sentence applying both to Jesus and the disciples. In both, the spirit was in accord with God's will; while the flesh, or physical nature, was shrinking.—*Abbott*. But Christ's will conquered his "flesh"; while the disciples' bodily weakness overbore their will.

39, 40. Again he went away, and prayed.

Luke adds that he prayed more earnestly, and that his sweat was like drops of blood. **The same words.** But with even more complete renunciation of his human will to the divine. (See Matt. 26. 42.) (5) *Let us learn from our great Exemplar to persevere in prayer.* He did not cease the struggle until he had conquered. **Asleep again.** Losing another priceless opportunity. **For their eyes were heavy.** They vainly tried to keep their eyes open, and slowly yielded to physical weariness. **Neither wist they.** "They knew not." Wist is an old English word.

41, 42. The third time. After a third interval of prayer. **Sleep on now, and take your rest.** The "Rise up, let us go," of the next verse seems at first sight to be directly contradictory to this, and some have explained the first phrase as one of irony, simply because the second must be taken literally. But this explanation seems to us to be utterly out of harmony with the spirit which Jesus showed throughout this sad visit to Gethsemane. It is probable, rather, that even in this climactic moment, when he himself was passing through so much of spiritual, mental, and physical suffering, he nevertheless had sympathy for the untimely weariness of his followers, and said indulgently to them, as we might say to children, "Sleep on now." But soon the flashing of the torches and clanking of the weapons of the motley guard which had come to arrest him were heard and seen from beyond the trunks of distant trees, and he said, **The hour is come,** the time of betrayal which he had foreseen; then, as a natural sequence, **Rise up, let us go.** All that remains is to meet the coming betrayal. (6) *When opportunities have been lost we can but face the result and suffer bravely.* Pay particular attention to the phrase, **Into the hands of sinners.** Much of our Redeemer's agony was due to his enforced contact with sin; and death was to him, as perhaps to none other, "the wages of sin"—but not his own.

INDUCTIVE NOTES.

Verse 32. They came. Jesus and the eleven. Judas was absent on his scheme of betrayal. They tarried long in the room where they had eaten the last passover and the first Lord's Supper. It is

probable that between the passover and the supper Jesus foretold the flight of the disciples, and the denials of Peter (Matt. 26. 31-35), and directed the apostles to prepare for the contest before them,