

General Statement.

It was about midnight on Thursday when Jesus and his eleven disciples left the supper-room, after the last discourses and the intercessory prayer narrated by John. John 13-17. Judas had gone out hours before, and was now on his traitorous errand with the officers and band from the chief priests. The Master and the eleven walked down the slopes of the Kedron valley, and up the Mount of Olives, until they reached an olive-garden, which bore the name Gethsemane, or "oil-press." At its entrance the Saviour left eight of his disciples to guard against surprise, and with the chosen three entered the dark retreat. The shadow of an approaching agony gathered over his heart and drew its lines upon his brow. The prevision of his approaching death, with all its horrors of physical, mental, and moral suffering, the consciousness of innocence, the knowledge that he was soon to be abandoned by all, the full realization of the world's guilt, which in some mysterious way he was to bear—all these united to oppress his soul. He bade the three disciples watch, while he should go further

within the grove to pray. Under the olive-trees he fell upon his face, and poured out the cry of his inmost soul before God. He prayed that the cup of wrath and woe, now pressing close upon his lips, might pass away, if the Father's love would permit. Feeling the need of companionship in his suffering, he rose from the ground and returned to his disciples. Alas! they were sleeping in the hour when their sympathy was most sorely needed! He awoke them with tender rebuke, and then entered the shadows to pray once more, with an earnestness which brought the blood in drops to his face, and yet with a spirit of self-surrender, which cried, "Thy will be done!" Again he returned to his disciples, and again found them overcome with sleep. A third time he prayed, uttering the same words; and then the victory came, and peace swept over the soul of the Son of man. With calm countenance he aroused his followers, and went forth to meet the traitor and his band.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 35. Then cometh Jesus. This was probably not far from midnight. The gates of the city were left open during passover-week; and they may have passed out by the one just north of the temple, now called St. Stephen's gate. **With them.** The eleven disciples; as Judas was now on his way with the band for his arrest. **Gethsemane.** "Oil press." It was an olive garden, on the western slope of the Mount of Olives. A place supposed to represent the locality, and certainly very near it, is now inclosed. Within it are eight venerable olive-trees, perhaps the descendants of those under which the agony took place. **Unto the disciples.** To the main body, eight in number. **Sit ye here.** Perhaps as a guard against surprise; perhaps because they could not enter into sympathy with his sorrow as deeply as the three others. **While I go and pray.** He felt the need of communion with his Father to support him in the approaching crisis. (1) *If our Saviour needed the help of prayer, how much more do we need it?*

37. He took with him. As a nearer guard, and to give him the sympathy of their presence and prayers while he prayed. Luke 22, 40. (2) *"In great trials we love solitude, but to have friends near."*—Bengel. **Peter and the two sons of Zebedee.** The three who were the natural leaders among the twelve; who had witnessed his transfiguration; and who more thoroughly than the rest could sympathize with him. **Began to be sorrowful and very heavy.** All the words employed by the gospel writers represent intense mental and spiritual suffering. We can only hint at the elements which may have entered into this agony. 1) The consciousness of the near approach of death to one in the prime of manhood, in vigorous health, and in fullness of intellectual powers. 2) The foreknowledge of all the physical tortures of the thorns, the scourge, the nails, and the cross, harder to bear than their experience. 3) The full prevision of the mental anguish, in the kiss of Judas, the denial of Peter, the desertion of all the disciples, the undesired malice of the people, the perversion of his good into evil, the consciousness of the nearest sin, misunderstood and misrepresented. 4) The fact of his own freedom to escape from the terrible fate, the feeling that by an act of the will he might avoid it, may have caused a momentary conflict between the higher will and the human nature, ended by his entire submission to the redemptive plan. 5) The temptings of Satan (Luke 4, 13; Heb. 2, 18), who always takes advantage of hours of weakness. 6) A my-story, which human thought cannot fathom, of the world's guilt pressing down upon his pure soul.

38. My soul. According to the best psychology, "the soul here is the human soul, the seat of the affections and passions, not the higher spiritual being."—Alford. **Sorrowful, even unto death.** In such an agony as would destroy life, if it were not alleviated or divine comfort bestowed. **Watch ye with me.** He might be conscious of their sympathy, up to the measure of their power to bestow it. (2) *Even a sympathy with another in sorrow is a strong comfort.*

(3) *Note the thorough exquisite humanity in our Saviour's craving for sympathy.*

39. Went a little further. Deeper into the recesses of the garden; "about a stone's cast," according to Luke. **Fell on his face.** The attitude of the most complete self-surrender and the deepest earnestness. **O my Father.** Even in the depth of his agony, the Son of man did not forget that God was his Father. (4) *In the darkest hours add on to the strong cord of the Father's love, if it be possible.* If the great ends of redemption for which he had become incarnate could be accomplished in any other way. **Let this cup pass from me.** "The cup," or, as given in Mark, "the hour," meant not any one element of his suffering, but its totality—the trials which that hour was to usher in, the betrayal, the wrongs, the death, with its sufferings, physical, mental, and spiritual. **Not as I will, but as thou wilt.** Under all the shrinking of his human nature, there lay the will of Jesus in complete accord with the divine purpose. (5) *Let us pray as our Master prayed in trouble: humbly, directly, earnestly, believingly, and submissively.*

40. Unto the disciples. The three whom he had left near to watch. **Findeth them asleep.** Not in deep slumber, but in a drowsy condition. Luke says, "sleeping for sorrow;" that is, as the result of the excitement and anxiety which they had felt since he had forewarned them of his own death and of their forsaking of him. "They forgot sorrow in sleep; Christ conquers it by prayer."—Abbott. **Saith unto Peter.** The leader of the apostles, and the one who had so lately vaunted his own faithfulness. **Could ye not watch.** He had not asked them to wrestle, but only to watch; a small request, even as "a cup of cold water, which they might have given if their will had been stronger. **Our hour.** Perhaps an indication, more or less definite, of the duration of the agony; or an allusion to the event as an hour or period in the Saviour's life.

41. Watch and pray. A double precept, and necessary; for as Wm. Jay says, "Prayer without watching is hypocrisy; and watching with out prayer is presumption." **That ye enter not into temptation.** "Let you place yourselves under the power of the temptation by your own neglect." The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. A sentence which might apply equally well both to Christ and the disciples. In both, the spirit was in accord with God's will; while the flesh, or physical nature, was shrinking. But in Christ the will conquered the flesh; while the disciples' bodily weakness overbore their will. (6) *Let us consult the spirit, not the flesh, in God's service.*

42. Again the second time. Luke tells us that he prayed more earnestly than before, inasmuch that he sweat, as it were, great drops of blood. Notice the change in the prayer, showing that more and more the will of the man Jesus was shaping itself according to the divine will. **Except I drink it.** Clearly he saw that the re-

demption
his endur
Thy will
der of sel

43. He
sympathy
again. T
to help th
were heav
open, and
(7) How ti

44. He
cause of t
time, (8)
trine, be
words. A

M. Jesu
Th. Jesu
W. The
Th. Chri
F. The
S. Perf
S. (W

Though
by the thi

No. 174, D

No. 173, D

No. 176, D

TIME.—
PLACE.—
RULES.—
Do

QUESTIONS

1. The S
Where is
Why did a
How mu
Name the
entrance?

What ma
How did
How int
evange-lis?

What wa
Was his p
Give a rea

2. The s

Did all the
Does it pr
Was his q
What time
To whom

Why?
Was it st
time?

What mus
What had
thus?

In what di

There has
sorrow-ous
how great.

For each
Do we shi
Do we pra
Do we pat