

III. The Exit, 46.

V. 46. *Rise.* A brief interval perhaps elapses between the last sentence and this. No doubt in the distance He sees the lanterns and the torches of Judas and the band approaching

(John 18 : 3). *Let us be going; to meet all the woe that the night and the morning shall bring. He is at hand; the traitorous disciple. The last act of the awful tragedy of Calvary is about to begin.*

APPLICATION See Lesson I

He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, v. 37. There are some friends whose very presence, much more than that of others, is a strength and comfort in a time of sorrow. It brings Christ very near to us to notice how, in depression and anguish, He desired the presence of these, His closest human friends. His hour of darkness is now past forever, but He has not forgotten it; and He who wished to have His friends near Him will never withhold His presence from those who need it.

My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, v. 38. We may, perhaps, wonder at the extreme distress manifested by our Lord in Gethsemane, and may contrast it with the conduct of martyrs and others who have gone through suffering to death without wailing and without fear. Now, it is probably true that even the physical sufferings of Christ were greater than those of other men; for suffering depends as much upon the sensitiveness of the sufferer as upon the character of the infliction. The same, no doubt, is true of His mental and spiritual nature. And yet these things do not account for the unexampled agony which Christ endured in the Garden. It is only when we remember that He was bearing the sin of the world, that we understand how it was that His burden seemed almost greater than He could bear.

If it be possible, let this cup pass, v. 39. This prayer teaches us that it is not wrong to shrink from pain and sorrow, and to ask God that, if possible, we may be spared. If we see loss of property, or bereavement, or ill-health impending, it is not wrong if we are distressed thereby and pray to God for deliverance. Human weakness and human fear are not in themselves sinful.

Watch and pray, v. 41. While human weakness and human fear are not, in themselves, sinful, we need to watch and pray

lest the weakness of the flesh tempt us to sin. This is not only our Lord's injunction but His example. Satan used all his weapons against Jesus. He tried to lure Him into sin by the glittering baits of ambition (Matt. 4 : 9); he sought to persuade Him by the remonstrances of his friends and disciples (Matt. 16 : 22); he tried to drive Him by the scourge of pain. But Jesus was always on His guard; He was always watching; and when the enemy approached, He warded off his attacks by prayer and drove him to flight by the Word of God.

Thy will be done, v. 42. The essence of all sin is opposition to the will of God. It was to this that Satan sought to tempt the Saviour. But he did not succeed. Naturally, Jesus desired to be spared suffering, if it were possible; but yet more earnestly He desired that God's will might be done. And if it were God's will that He should suffer, if God's purposes could be accomplished only in that way, then He was willing that it should be so. And whoever can express His ultimate desire in the prayer: "Thy will be done," has put Satan beneath his feet.

Notice what this victory is. It is not merely submission to the inevitable. That may be a sullen thing. This is the conviction that God is all-wise and all-loving and that therefore His will, whatever it may be, must always be the best. He who ends his conflict with the shrinking or rebellious flesh, with this conviction, may emerge from the conflict pale and exhausted, but he will be triumphant. And whereas mere stoicism may harden our natures into barren rock, this Christ-like resignation breaks up the soil and makes it fertile ground, where grow the flowers and fruits of sympathy and loving helpfulness.

Sleep on now and take your rest, v. 45. The disciples had missed their opportunity of