PART TWO

NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES
The phrase τὸ μὲν πνεῦμα πρόθυμον, ἡ δὲ σῶμα ἄθλητής (“the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak”), found in verbally identical forms in Mark 14:38b and Matt. 26:41b, is a simple but carefully crafted proverb formulated antithetically (hereinafter referred to as the “dominical proverb”). This dominical proverb is preceded, in both Mark 14:38a and Matt. 26:41a, by a hortatory saying: γηγορεῖτε καὶ προσεύχεσθε, ἵνα μὴ ἔλθητε [Matt: εἰσέλθητε] εἰς πειρασμόν, “Keep awake and pray, that you do not enter into temptation” (hereinafter referred to as the “hortatory saying”). Again, the Matthaean and Markan versions are nearly identical. The sole verbal variation consists in Matthew’s preference for the compound verb εἰσέρχομαι in contrast to Mark’s use of the simple form ἔρχομαι. The preceding and particularly the following verses in both Matthew and Mark, however, exhibit considerable verbal variation. Luke reproduces only the hortatory saying, which he does twice, once in Luke 22:40 and again in Luke 22:46. In the first instance, uttered before Jesus goes off to pray alone, it serves as a warning: προσεύχεσθε μὴ εἰσέλθειν εἰς πειρασμόν (“Pray that you do not enter into temptation”). Luke inserts this hortatory saying in place of the Markan phrase “Sit here while I pray” (Mark 14:32), slightly expanded by Matthew to “Sit here while I go over there and pray” (Matt 26:36). The second, as in Mark and Matthew, is uttered when Jesus returns and finds the disciples sleeping: τί καθεύδετε; ἀνοστάντες προσεύχεσθε, ἵνα μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς πειρασμόν (“Why are you sleeping? After rising, pray that you do not enter into temptation”). Luke has thus used the hortatory saying as an inclusio for the short episode narrating the prayer of Jesus in vv. 41–42.

In this essay in honor of my esteemed teacher and dissertation adviser, Robert M. Grant on his 90th birthday, I propose to explore

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1 Matt. 26:40 has fourteen words compared with the slightly shorter parallel in Mark 14:37 with twelve words. But Matt. 26:42, with twenty-one words, is considerably shorter than the parallel in Mark 14:39, which has just eight words.