

January 22

Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord. Psalm 31:24

IT would seem as though the Adversary at times attempted to discourage us by making us think that the trials and difficul-

(1 Pet 5:8-9 KJV) *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: {9} Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."*

R5183 "The lion has a very stealthy walk. On his feet are soft cushions, which enable him to come very near to his prey before his approach is recognized. It is said that, at this point, when the beast is *about to spring upon his prey*, he roars so loudly that the victim is paralyzed with fear and thus is easily caught.

Satan, the Adversary of the Church, is strong and lion-like, vigilant and fully awake. As the Apostle Paul declares, he seeks to use every opportunity against us. He lies in wait, seeking to devour us. Although he is alert, yet he never *approaches* us with a roar, but creeps stealthily upon us in some unlooked for place or time, to devour us, to overcome us, to crush out our spiritual life, and particularly to destroy our faith in God. As those whose ears are trained to detect the footfalls of the lion will hear his steps, while those who are unfamiliar with his habits will not hear the slightest sound, so may we, whose ears the Lord has opened, and whose eyes have been anointed with the eyesalve of consecration and submission to the Lord's will, be of quick perception to recognize the approach of our arch-enemy and to resist him. Let us stand, clad in the full armor which the Word of God supplies, and in His strength wielding the Sword of the Spirit."

R5329 "GOOD COURAGE REQUIRED FOR OVERCOMING *"Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord."*--Psa 31:24...

The Lord's people need to have *great* courage; for if they allow the Adversary to beat their courage down, he will soon put them out of the battle entirely. A *retreating* soldier is of no more good than one who has not gone out to battle. Instead of losing courage we are to resign our earthly interests to our Father and trust Him that in the present life He will guide us, will overrule everything for good to those who are "the called according to His purpose."...

We have exchanged the earthly interests and hopes for the Heavenly interests and hopes. By our daily experiences the Lord is testing us. We must be on guard to overcome the flesh. It requires a great deal of courage to fight down the tendencies to sin. And it requires still more courage that, after battling

ties of the "narrow way" of sacrifice will be unavailing anyhow, and that we might as well give up....And what course should we pursue at such a time? We should follow the example of our Lord, and seek the Father's face, anxious to know whether or not our interests are all right with Him; anxious for

with the weaknesses and frailties of the flesh, and conquering it, we should additionally force our human bodies to *sacrifice*, to abandon the earthly things, and to serve the Lord. It requires a *great deal* of courage; therefore we are of ourselves insufficient...

But we are exhorted to put our trust in the Lord, and assured that we "can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth us." (Phil. 4:13'.) His is a power sufficient for us...

A courage from *right* principles, based on faith in the Lord, is not one of bragadocio, but a courage that is noble and pleasing to God. It has its source in a realization that *God has promised*, and that God is watching, and desires us to be joint-heirs with His Son in His Kingdom. He is merely testing us to see whether we will prove faithful. And this courage with us must also be to do things in the right way...

Such courage would say to us, Do your duty, whatever may be the Lord's will for you. Hope in the Lord, even though your motive will be misunderstood. We should have the good courage to stand for what is *right*, whether our reward be in this life or in that life which is to come.

This exhortation is for the business man who is a Christian. His worldly friends may say, You will fail in your business. You cannot advertise your business. If you tell the truth, the people will not patronize you; they will go to a place where a host of lies will be told them. If he takes their advice, he will do a larger business, but he will make a failure of the chief affair of his life, he will lose the great Prize.

It will apply to workingmen--that they may advocate right principles, and be not faint-hearted and fearful to express the truth...

The lesson of our text is, BE OF GOOD COURAGE; for this is the way in which we shall demonstrate our faith in the Lord. He who hopes in the Lord and is loyal to the Lord will be courageous in proportion to his loyalty and his faith.

This kind of courage will stand by us in all circumstances. For instance, our Lord in addressing His disciples on one occasion said, "Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake;...take no thought [beforehand] how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak." (Matt. 10:18,19.) The Lord's people, whatever circumstances may arise, will have such faith and trust in God that they will conduct themselves courageously, relying on God's power. The Greek here seems to give the thought: *Do not be worried* when you shall be brought before kings and judges.

R5147 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0) THE ADVERSARY'S TACTICS

"For we are not ignorant of his devices."--2 Cor. 2:11.

AS WE PROGRESS toward the consummation of the Harvest, it should not surprise us that in every way the Adversary becomes more persistent in his attacks. Opposition to the Divine Plan of the Ages is on the increase everywhere. Slandorous misrepresentations

are so unblushingly made as to carry a measure of conviction with them, to the injury of the Cause we serve.

What Satan cannot do against the Truth along the lines of logic, the Bible and common sense, he seeks to do through slanderous

some assurances that while the world may hate us, and say all manner of evil against us falsely, we still have His approval; anxious for some fresh assurance that it will be well with us, that the Lord will grant us a part in the better resurrection to life eternal. Z.'01-79R2774:6

The way in which God will give us a mouth and wisdom may vary according to circumstances--perhaps by suggestions from another; perhaps in the hearing of the testimony of some one else; or it may be that a text of Scripture that would be especially helpful would come to our mind. But the thought is that our trust is in the Lord, and that we are not to be in fear and trembling.

The Lord addressed these words to His disciples--the ignorant and unlearned. For them to be brought before kings and magistrates and judges would naturally cause them much apprehension. What should they say? How could they answer those men--those great, learned men! They were very humble, and they realized their ignorance; but the Lord guided them...

If we are in any straits, any difficulties, we are to remember that the Scriptures assure us that "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear [reverence] Him, and delivereth them." (Psa. 34:7.) This thought should tend to make us cool and collected in our minds, and should enable us to conduct ourselves courageously, feeling ourselves in this close relationship with Him, and having the confidence that this thought would give us. Furthermore, we realize that we are not wise enough to know just what God's purposes respecting us may be. We know not, therefore, just how the Lord may prefer to have this or that matter eventuate...

Whatever may be the outcome of any matter to us, we are to accept it as from the Lord, whether we are able to discern the reason for it or not..."

R5185 "The New Creature may develop even when the outer man is perishing. Satan succeeded in having the chief priests and Pharisees cause the death of our Lord; but this was the very means by which He entered into glory. In His dealings with our Lord the Father has given us an illustration of His dealings with us. So we may know that even if Satan should appear to get the victory over us, these "light afflictions" will, as we are told, "work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."--2Cor. 4:17.

We know that we have no power with which to oppose Satan. None is sufficient for these things except the Lord. But He is greater than are Satan and all his angels. We are looking forward with the eye of faith to the things that are unseen. So it behooves us to be steadfast, immovable, full of faith, and therefore able to meet whatever the Father permits to come upon us."

misrepresentations of all who take their stand on the side of Truth; and his opposition is incurred usually in proportion to the activity of the servants of the Truth. This opposition is to them a trial of faith and of patient endurance. It tests their loyalty to God, to the Truth and to the brethren. It becomes, likewise, a test of brotherly love to the household of faith. It does a sifting or separating work. "The Lord your God proveth you."--Deut. 13:3.

The same line of attack furnishes special trials for the church nominal--both wheat and tares. It gives opportunity for exhibitions of envy, anger, malice, hatred, strife, evil-surmising and evil-speaking. Thus many are being tested and their love of unrighteousness is being shown. "By their fruits ye shall know them." (Matt. 7:20.) The thorn and brier classes, however closely affiliated with religious things, are not Vine branches. They do not bear the fruit of the Vine, but contrariwise are injurious to the Lord's people. "The poison of asps is under their lips." Some of them are courageous enough to make lies; others, less courageous, love the lies and are mean enough to circulate them. The advance of the Day of the Lord will ultimately reveal the true situation. Some will have shame and contempt, while others will shine as the stars forever and ever.

All who have the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness and love--will be tested, too, along these same lines. The Lord's will for such is that they should deepen and broaden their characters along all these lines in proportion as contrary temptations assail them. Thus more and more will they become copies of God's dear Son, and the trials will assist in making them meet, fit for the Kingdom.

ACCUSER OF THE BRETHERN

Another of Satan's devices is to discourage the Lord's faithful disciples who are seeking to know and to do His will. The more conscientious they are, the more subject they will be to Satan's suggestions of unworthiness, rejection, condemnation, Second Death. God permits this as a test or trial to faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." To be developed, faith must be tried with opposition. The more our faith is developed, the more pleasing in the Father's sight we shall be. He would have our faith in Himself implicit, unwavering.

The Adversary, on the contrary, would destroy our faith. Sometimes he attempts this by misrepresenting God's character as unloving, unjust, unkind, and sometimes by exaggerating our weaknesses and failures, to cause us to cease striving for the goal of Divine approval. He would have us give up in despair.

Persons who have been obsessed by evil spirits tell plainly that first of all the spirits personated God and His angels, advised prayer, etc. Afterwards they gave evil suggestions. By and by they gave both good and evil suggestions. The evil suggestions entertained, they would next condemn the individual for having entertained them. Finally all pretense would be dropped, and the individual would be told that he had sinned away all Divine favor and was wholly at the mercy of the evil spirits. Then would come suggestions of evil deeds or of suicide, the endeavor being made to drive the individual to a full surrender of his mind, his will, in order to full possession and mental unbalance.

The only remedy for persons in such a deplorable condition is that they exert their will power to oppose all such false suggestions. Nothing is so helpful under such circumstances as correct knowledge of the Divine teaching respecting God's Love and the abundance of His merciful provision in Christ. Persons in this condition should be encouraged to cast themselves fully and unreservedly

at the foot of the cross in the spirit of their minds--in fullness of consecration. Then in proportion to their faith they may lay hold upon the Lord in prayer for complete deliverance from the Adversary's power. We know of no other way to get rid of the evil spirits.

There are also cases where the obsession has taken place and where the Adversary seems to be able to exercise an evil influence upon the mind, causing doubt, fear, alienation from the Lord. Generally "sin lieth at the door"--some violation of the soul's covenants with the Lord. Such are in danger of great gloom, loss of faith, trust--everything. The cure for their case is a knowledge of God's real character--His great Love and sympathy exercised through the Lord Jesus Christ and made available through Him to all who give their lives in full consecration.

Faith should triumph, or the light of joy and blessing will die. "According to your faith be it unto you," is the Divine rule. Those who will not exercise the faith will never be acceptable to the Father for membership in the Kingdom class. Such must wait for the next Age and have different experiences. The Little Flock, the Elect ones whom the Lord is now choosing, must all be faith-*full*.

"THE WICKED ONE TOUCHETH HIM NOT"

The Apostle John declares that a certain course of conduct is possible in which the Adversary would be unable to touch us. (I John 5:18.) The picture brought before our mental eyes is that of a charmed circle, within which God's people may come. This circle is not a fence, but merely a line of light, which can easily be overstepped. On the inside of that circle is the Lord's favor. The very center of it is the Lord Himself, the Head of the Church. The exhortation of the Scriptures, the leadings of the Holy Spirit, and the providences of the Lord, all encourage His followers to press close to Him--"Nearer, my God, to Thee."

Outside the charmed circle are the powers of evil. These are sometimes allowed to touch the earthly interests and temporal affairs of the children of the Light; but the demon influence is not permitted to really touch the New Creatures in Christ inside this circle. Over that line they cannot exercise their influence. But alas! lured by the world, the flesh and the Devil, some of the saints at times go too close to the line, perhaps pursuing some fleshly bait or golden bauble or earthly honor. Such the Adversary is ever ready to lay hold of, to drag them out into the darkness of sin, doubt, despair--further and further away from the Lord.

The lesson of this picture to all Spirit-begotten children of God is, "Abide in Him," "Abstain from all appearance of evil," "Draw near unto God," "Press onward and upward," "Take heed to yourselves," "Forget the things that are behind," "Mortify your flesh," and earthly desires and ambitions, Keep close to the Master, that "the Wicked One touch you not."

But we again remind any who may be touched by the Adversary and temporarily ensnared that God is full of loving-kindness, that His mercy endureth forever, for all those who desire to live in harmony with Him. While it is true that the nearer we get to the separating line, the nearer do we come within the range of the Adversary's influence and power, and the weaker becomes the power of the Truth, the Spirit of the Lord, in our control, nevertheless, there is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, and the Lord will welcome the strayed sheep, even though He temporarily allow trying experiences. Ultimately to the returning one these experiences will prove valuable lessons, safeguarding against any further tendency to stray or to dally with earthly things.

R2773 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

GETHSEMANE--WATCHING AND PRAYING

--MATT. 26:36-46.--FEB. 24.--

"Not my will, but thine, be done."--Luke 22:42.

NO ONE CAN thoughtfully read this lesson of our Lord's dark hour in Gethsemane, and his "strong cryings and tears unto him [the Father], who was able to save him out of death" (Heb. 5:7), without feeling that there is something thoroughly incorrect in the idea so prevalent amongst Christian people that our Lord Jesus was his own Heavenly Father, Jehovah; and that it would have been a pretence, a mockery of prayer, for him to have supplicated as here represented, unless it were true also that instead of being in any sense the Father, he was simply what he claimed to be, the Son, the sent of God, the only begotten of the Father, the first-born of all creation, the beginning of the creation of God. (John 10:29; 1:14; Col. 1:15; Rev.

3:14.) There is absolutely no other standpoint from which the language of our Lord and the apostles and his course of conduct are reasonably interpretable. On this point the earnest truth-seeker is referred to MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. V.

Our previous lesson closed with our Lord and his disciples leaving the upper room, where they had commemorated his death. They went to the Mount of Olives, to an orchard there, known as Gethsemane,-- the name signifying "oil-press place," probably because olives were there pressed and the oil extracted used both for light and for food. One of the Evangelists speaks of it as the "garden of Gethsemane," but the word garden, as used in olden times, corre-

sponds more nearly with our word orchard; it was not a flower-garden. There is a small enclosure now on the side of Mount Olivet, about 150 feet square, which is reputed to be the place of our Lord's agonizing prayer. It contains eight very old and very gnarled olive trees, and whether the exact spot or not, it represents it sufficiently well.

Our Lord probably had two reasons for going forth as he did that night. First, realizing that he would be arrested by the traitor Judas and the band he would bring, our Lord probably did not wish to bring commotion or trouble upon the friend who had so kindly permitted him the use of the upper room. Secondly, he desired the still quiet of midnight, out upon the hillside where he could be alone with God, to pour out his soul in prayer and obtain the strength necessary for the ordeal at hand. In harmony with this last thought, we find that when our Lord reached the entrance to the orchard he left eight of the disciples there, as an outer guard, so to speak, or as pickets, to give notice; and took with him the same three disciples whom he had specially honored on other occasions, Peter, James and John: Peter, the bold and impulsive, James and John, the so-called "sons of thunder"-- the three most courageous, most zealous, most earnest, of his disciples. These he wished to have nearest to himself in this time of anxiety. And yet, on this occasion, he desired to be still more alone in his prayer, for even these truest friends could not appreciate the situation: "of the people there were none with him." Hence he left these and went a stone's throw further, where he prostrated himself upon his knees, and with his face to the earth, as the various accounts show, and thus, alone, he communed with the Father.

The different accounts of our Lord's experience on this occasion, grouped together, show us that mental anguish seemed to come upon him here with a force of poignancy he had never before experienced; and that the load became increasingly heavy--"sorrowful even unto death," a sorrow which almost crushed out his very life, says Matthew. Mark says (14:33) that he was "sore amazed," as tho the sorrow had come upon him unexpectedly, as tho he were bewildered. Luke, who was a physician, says that he was "in an agony," a contest, a struggle, the language used in the Greek implying a struggle of increasing force and severity, so that "his sweat became as it were great drops of blood;" and this bloody sweat is not unknown to physicians today, altho very rare. It marks an extreme tension of feeling--sorrow nigh unto death.

Infidelity has suggested that this account of our Redeemer's sorrow, tears and prayers, attests his weakness. They argue that there have been many martyrs of various religions who have faced death with boldness, stoical firmness, sometimes with smiles, and that this account shows Jesus to have been cowardly, and inferior instead of superior to others. But there is a philosophy connected with the matter which they seem not to grasp. There is a dullness and numbness connected with fallen, degraded, coarse manhood that can regard pain and death with indifference,--which permits them either to undergo it themselves without great emotion, or to inflict it mercilessly upon others without compassion. We are glad that Jesus was not one of those cold, stoical icebergs, but that he was full of warm, loving, tender feelings and sensibilities; and that we can realize consequently that he is able to sympathize with the most tender, the most delicate, the most refined, the most sensitive, more than any other human being. He must have felt keenly the conditions under which he had placed himself, in laying down his life on our behalf; because the more perfect the organism the more sensitive and high-strung the feelings, the greater the capacity for joy and the greater the capacity for sorrow: and our Lord being absolutely perfect must have been immeasurably more susceptible to the influences of pain than others.

Besides this he had a perfect life, unforfeited, and knew it, and realized that he was about to part with it; while others of the human family possess only a forfeited or condemned existence and realize that they *must* part with this sometime anyway. It would therefore be a very different matter for our Lord to lay down his life than for any of his followers to lay down their lives. Supposing 100 to represent perfect life, our Lord had the full one hundred units to lay down,

* Prof. Tischendorf shows that this account of our Lord's bloody sweat is not found in the *Vatican MS.*, and that altho it appeared in the original *Sinaitic MS.* it was crossed out by a later critic. The passage is therefore doubtful, or at least questionable.

while we, being more than ninety-nine-hundredths parts dead, through trespasses and sins and condemnation, could at most have only the one-hundredth part to lay down. A cold, stoical indifference to the loss of life, based upon knowledge that it could last but a short time longer anyway, would therefore be a very different thing from the clear knowledge which our Lord had, based upon his experiences with the Father "before the world was," and the realization that the life he was now about to lay down was not forfeited through sin, but was his own voluntary sacrifice.

There can be no doubt that this thought of the extinguishment of life was an important factor in our Lord's sorrow. The Apostle clearly intimates it in the words (Heb. 5:7), "Who in the days of his flesh... offered up prayers and supplications, with strong cryings and tears, unto him who was able to save him from [out of] death, and was heard in [respect to] that he feared"--extinction. Intent continually upon doing the Father's will, day by day had passed in self-sacrifice, until now, in a few hours, the whole would be complete; and the thought of this brought with it another thought, *viz.*: Had he done the Father's will perfectly? Could he claim, and would he receive the reward promised him, a resurrection from the dead?

Had he failed in any particular to come up to the exact standard of perfection his death would have meant extinction; and altho all men fear extinction none could know the full depth and force of its meaning as could he who not only had the perfection of life, but had recollection of his previous glory with the Father before the world was. For him the very thought of an extinction would bring anguish, terror of soul. This thought seems not to have come to our Lord with the same force previously. It was this, therefore, that bore down upon him now so heavily as an astonishing sorrow unto death. He saw himself about to suffer according to the Law as an evil-doer, and the question naturally arose, was he entirely blameless, and would the heavenly judge thoroughly acquit him whom so many were disposed to condemn?

After praying awhile he went to the three disciples, in whom he had greatest confidence, and who, more than any others, were his tried and trusted companions, but he found them asleep. Luke explains that their sleep was the result of sorrow. The night and its lessons had been impressive; the memorial supper, which they did not fully understand, nevertheless left a weight of sorrow upon them, as the Master had intimated that it represented his death, and had further intimated that one of their number would betray him. The reaction from the sorrow brought a measure of stupor. Very gently our Lord upbraided them: "Could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation." It is not merely that you need to watch on my account; you need to be in a watching attitude on your own account. An hour of severe trial is upon us all; watch and pray lest ye fall in this evil time.

Then our Lord went to pray again. We are told that his prayers were in the same words; that is to say, that the same sentiments were expressed; and again a third time similarly: the one matter was weighing upon his heart. Could he rely upon it now, that having sought to do the Father's will, that having finished his course, he had done it acceptably? Could he have full assurance of faith that God would save him out of death by a resurrection? In answer to his petition a heavenly messenger was sent to comfort him, to assure him, to strengthen him. We are not informed what message the angel brought, but we can see that it was a message of peace, and that he brought assurances that our Lord's course had the Father's approval, and that he would be brought again from the dead by a resurrection. These were quite sufficient to give our Lord all the strength and courage necessary for the ordeal before him; and from that moment onward we find him the coolest and calmest of the notable figures brought to our attention. When approached by Judas and his band he was the most calm and self-possessed of all; when before the chief priest, Caiaphas, it was the same way; when before Pilate the same; when crucified, the same; he had found peace in the message that he was approved of the Father, and that all the gracious promises of glory, honor and immortality were his, and now he could pass through any ordeal.

The Scriptures assure us that our Lord was tempted in all points like as we (his brethren) are, and we see in this his experience in Gethsemane an illustration of one of the most severe trials which come to the Lord's people. ^[1]It would seem as tho the Adversary at

^[1] ½ Jan. 22 Manna, Psa. 31:24

times attempted to discourage us by making us think that the trials and difficulties of the "narrow way" of sacrifice will be all unavailing anyhow, and that we might as well give up. When such thoughts come to those who are earnestly and faithfully seeking to fulfil the conditions of their consecration vows they constitute one of the severest trials that could overtake them; if they have given up this world and its affections, hopes, aims, desires, exchanging all these for the heavenly, then anything which seems to becloud the heavenly hopes, leaves them in a darkness more utter, more dense, than they could have known had they never seen and appreciated the glorious promises. ^[2] And what course should we pursue at such a time? We should follow the example of our Lord, and seek the Father's face, anxious to know whether or not everything is all right with him; anxious for some assurances that while the world may hate us, and say all manner of evil against us falsely, we still have his approval; anxious for some fresh assurance that it will be well with us, that the Lord will grant us a part in the better resurrection to life eternal.

But while we draw this correspondency between our experiences and those of our Lord we should not forget that there is an immeasurable difference; that we are of the dying and ninety-nine-hundredths parts dead already, and that therefore we cannot so fully appreciate the meaning of death nor the meaning of life eternal; and besides all this we have the example of our Lord, and the further assurance that our share in the First resurrection is not to be attained through perfection of our own, but through his perfection, provided we shall have attested to the Lord our full loyalty of heart, of intention, of will, however imperfect the results of our efforts to glorify him in our bodies and spirits.

The Evangelist records that our Lord prayed, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." It may be that our Lord meant by this, If your infinite love and mercy see it possible in any manner to accomplish your purposes of salvation for mankind without it being necessary for me to die, then grant it to be so. But if this were the Lord's thought it would imply that he had not fully grasped the Father's plan of a restitution for mankind, made possible through a *ransom price* for Adam and his sin; for, seeing this, our Lord could not have supposed that anything short of the full ransom could secure the results. Quite possibly, however, the thought which bore heavily upon him was the realization now coming vividly to his mind that if apprehended as a blasphemer it would be the policy of his enemies not to destroy him secretly, but to deliver him over to the Romans; and he could realize the influence and power they would exert to secure the performance of their wishes, and he knew that the Roman method of execution was that of crucifixion, and he knew also that the Scriptures explicitly said, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

Here, then, seems to have been the centre of his thought: I shall be esteemed of all my countrymen as forsaken of God, and as accursed of him; I shall die as a blasphemer, as a malefactor; whereas my every sentiment is, and has always been, fealty, loyalty to the Father. This, we believe, was the special feature of our Lord's anxiety, called the "cup" of sorrow, which he wished, if possible, might be removed. We believe that he knew his *death* to be necessary, unavoidable, as he had many times informed his disciples; but that it was this ignominious form of death, "even the death of the cross," that staggered him; for it not only bespoke shame and misrepresentation before the people, and those whom he loved and to whom he sought to do good, but it carried with it also the thought that he was accursed of God; and if accursed of God he could have no hope for a realization of the glorious promise of a resurrection. But when assured through the angel that he would not be actually accused of God, even tho he would for a time take the place of the accursed Adam and be "made a curse for us," his race, then even the cross and its shame could be endured with fortitude.

WATCH AND PRAY LEST YE ENTER INTO TEMPTATION

In the case of our Lord and the apostles we see illustrated the value of watchfulness and prayer in the dark hour of trouble. Our Lord followed the direction he gave to the disciples: he watched, he prayed, he got a blessing, he was strengthened, and came off victor. They did not watch and did not pray, failing to realize the necessities of the occasion, and as a result we find them scattered, bewildered;--

and one of them, the very strongest of them all, who boastingly had said a little while before, "Tho all men forsake thee yet will not I," was so overpowered by his surroundings, and so weak through lack of the very strength he should have obtained through watching and prayer, that he denied the Lord with profanity.

Whenever we find the Lord's people attempting to live a life of holiness and consecration, yet ignoring the injunction of our Lord to watch and pray, we know that they are unwise; and that however much they may be virgins, pure ones, they are foolish: they cannot hope to gain the victory over self and sin and the Adversary, single-handed, alone. If the Master himself needed strengthening, surely we also need it; and if he received it in response to supplications with strong cryings and tears, it is an intimation to us of the way in which God is pleased to bestow the full assurance of faith which is able to strengthen us as good soldiers to endure any and everything in his name and service. Those who seek the Lord earnestly and in prayer are as sure to receive a blessing as was the Lord Jesus himself; and altho there will not come to them the same kind of heavenly messenger to comfort and encourage them, nevertheless a heavenly messenger of another kind will surely be sent. It may be in the person of a fellow-disciple, able to enter into and sympathize with us in our trials as difficulties, as none of the apostles could sympathize with our Lord or assist him. Or it may be that the messenger sent will be one of the apostles themselves, through the many gracious words of inspiration which God has communicated to us through them in his Word. But however the strength may come, it must be the assurance, not of men nor of angels, but of God, that we are pleasing and acceptable to him,--and that we may claim and expect the exceeding great and precious things which he has in reservation for them that love him.

So to speak, we are now in the hour of trial which cometh upon the whole world to try them. The present is represented in the Scriptures to be "the hour of temptation" or testing at the close of this age. It is the Gethsemane hour, in this sense of the word, to all who are the Lord's true people, fully consecrated to him. It is the hour, therefore, in which we, like our Lord, should be seeking the Father's face to receive the full assurance that we are his, and that he is ours; and that we may rely confidently on his strength to carry us through this time. It is the time in which we are to make sure, as we sometimes sing:

^[3]"O let no earthborn cloud arise

To hide thee from thy servant's eyes."

It is a time in which those who neglect the Master's words, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation," will be sure to enter into temptation, and be tolerably sure to fall therein. And the fall will be severe, --and even tho, like Peter, they should afterward be recovered out of it, it will be with weeping.

^[4]Some make the mistake of praying without watching; others make the mistake of watching without praying; but the safe and only proper method is that which our Lord directed, to combine the two. We are to watch, and to be on our guard against the encroachments of the world, the flesh and the devil. We are to watch for all the encouragements of the Lord's Word, the evidence of their fulfilment, the signs that betoken his presence and the great changes of dispensation just at hand. We are to watch for everything that will strengthen us in faith and hope and loyalty and love; and while watching we are to pray without ceasing. We are to pray together as the Lord's people; we are to pray in our homes, as families; we are to pray in secret, in private. ^[5]We are to have the spirit of prayer in all that we say and do: that is to say, our hearts should be going out continually to the Lord for guidance in all of life's affairs, that we may do with our might what our hands find to do, in a manner that will be acceptable to him, and that we may be shielded by him from temptation that would otherwise be beyond our endurance, and that we may be ultimately delivered from the Evil One and have a place in our Lord's Kingdom. Brethren and sisters, let us more and more remember and put into practice, in every home in which the WATCH TOWER is a visitor, these words of our Lord, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

^[3] Hymn 273

^[4] Nov. 3 Manna, Matt. 26:41

^[5] Nov. 27 Manna, Eph. 6:18

^[2] ½ Jan. 22 Manna