

November 3

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Matthew 26:41

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

R5835 "THE UNSPEAKABLE PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER

The Apostle Paul exhorts the saints that they "pray always, with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance."... Our prayers should be *in the spirit*-- earnest, sincere. The children of God are not to "say prayers," they are to *pray*. There is much formal prayer -- much saying of prayers -- which do not get higher than the head...

It is a most wonderful privilege to draw near the great Creator and Lord of Heaven and earth; and we should come in the spirit of reverence and devotion... True prayer is the language of the heart. Therefore the greater our earnestness, the more acceptable the prayer will be, and the greater blessing shall we receive...

And we are to "watch thereunto, with all perseverance."... We should learn to watch for the answers to our prayers, and thus learn the lesson of appreciation and gratitude to Him as we realize that He has granted us our request...

Our hearts should go out continually to the Lord for His guidance in all our affairs and experiences, that we may serve Him in a manner that will be pleasing and acceptable to Him, that we may be shielded from temptations that without His aid would be beyond our endurance... Dear brethren, let us constantly put into practice the injunction of our Master, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."--Mark 14:38."

R5331 "Temptations may be presented to us many times a day, and when they come we may be deceived and misled. But a temptation *resisted* makes us so much the *stronger* to resist the next. And so the Apostle James says that we are to "count it all joy when we fall *into* divers temptations." (James 1:2.) But no one could count a *temptation* a joy if, when it should come upon him, he would *fall in it--enter into it*.

St. Peter could never look back without regret to the moment when he denied his Master. If he had been watching and praying for guidance, he would have come off conqueror when Jesus was arraigned before the tribunal; he would not have thought of denying his Lord. He would have been stronger when the temptation came...

But, although he was caught in the temptation, he ultimately gained the victory. It was cock-crowing time, and Peter, hearing the cock crow, said to himself, There, that is just what Jesus said--that before the cock should crow I would deny Him thrice. So St. Peter went out and wept bitterly; and, after he had it out with God in tears and prayers, he started again in the good way. And so *our* entering into temptation may not mean our utter rout. But the more we *resist* temptation, not allowing it to overcome us, the stronger characters we will become...

"Be not like dumb, driven **cattle**;

Be a **hero** in the strife!"

We might be in the Lord's army and

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 dispensations just at hand. We are to watch

yet be *like* driven cattle. But we are to be intelligent...

Let us be watchful, active, alert, and co-labor with God and with the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to consider the offer made to us -- the great High calling -- the most wonderful thing ever known in all creation! We shall never have another opportunity of showing God and our Lord Jesus our zeal for righteousness and our earnestness of spirit. The present opportunity is a special one. God has made it possible for all of us, who are in harmony with Him, to grow in grace and in knowledge, and thus to be more intelligent in our service. And we are to pray in harmony with that intelligence.

What may be the character of the temptations which shall come upon us, we may not clearly discern in advance; for if we knew all about them beforehand, they would be but slight temptations and easily overcome. Watch, therefore, and pray always. The only safe way is to be *always prepared*; for our Adversary, the Devil, is seeking whom he may devour. He knows our weak points better even than we do, and is ever ready to take advantage of them. Each of us needs the Spirit of the Lord in his heart, as well as His "grace to help in time of need," if we would be overcomers. Our daily exhortation to self should be,

"My soul, be on thy guard,

Ten thousand foes arise;

The hosts of Sin are pressing hard

To draw thee from the prize."

R5312 "THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN FLESH AND SPIRIT "*Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*"--Matt. 26:41..."

The Lord had temptations; and all of His faithful disciples must also have temptations. And the Apostle James assures us that the having of temptation and the resisting of temptation will bring us special blessing in our development of the character-likeness of Christ. The Lord, then, did not mean that by watching and praying we would not have temptations come to us, but that we would not fail in those temptations...

"The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." This cannot be understood to mean what it would mean in our own case. The disciples at this time were not New Creatures in Christ. They did not receive the begetting of the Spirit until Pentecost... To them it merely meant that they were willing in spirit, in mind, in intention. These intentions were to be good. They were to demonstrate that they were "Israelites indeed," and that they were not hypocritical... Their intention was better than their ability to perform; consequently they needed specially to watch and to pray.

THE NATURE OF THE BATTLE...

The old creature desires earthly things and comforts of the present life -- honor of men, etc.--and is continually pulling toward the things which it desires and craves.

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. Z. '01-80 R2775:5

The New Creature must conquer the old creature and its desires, which more or less interfere with the New Creature's engagements in the Covenant of Sacrifice."

R853 "Every test that is applied to us, places us in a critical situation, so that we need to watch and pray that we may have strength to overcome."

R5201 "He who resists the smallest temptation thereby strengthens his character that he may be able to withstand the greater ones.

A good story is told which illustrates the wisdom of not entering into temptation. A man who desired to hire a coachman had a number of applicants for the position. They were ushered into his office, and he asked them, "How near could you drive to the edge of a precipice without danger of accident?" One said he could drive within a foot without fear of falling over; another thought he could safely come within six inches of the edge; and so on. Finally, one man who had listened in silence to the others, said, "I do not know how near to the edge of the precipice I could safely drive; but I do know that I would keep as far away from it as I possibly could." This man was given the position.

This is the principle upon which we should act. The one who keeps the farthest away from temptation is on the safe side. Those who feel too confident of their own strength and power and go too near the danger line are liable to slip over the edge. Let us ever pray that we may not enter into temptation; let us also *watch* that we may keep out of danger."

R5550 Jesus "said unto them plainly that ...they would all be offended... St. Peter, full of confidence in his own devotion to the Lord, denied this, declaring that it would not be true in his case--that even though it should be true of all the others, he was ready to die with the Master, rather than to deny Him. Jesus still insisted that St. Peter was in great danger. He was trusting too much to his flesh, and not looking to God and prayerfully watching against temptation..."

Surely there is a lesson here for all the followers of Jesus--today as well as then. It is right that we should feel ourselves thoroughly determined to be loyal to the Lord's Cause to our very last breath; for such a determination is very necessary to victory. The mistake made by many is in not realizing how severe the trials and temptations may become--in not realizing the necessity of Heavenly assistance in our every time of need. The Apostle wrote, "When I am weak, then am I strong." (2 Corinthians 12:10.) By this he doubtless meant, When fully loyal to the Lord, I feel my own weakness and insufficiency, but I am strong because then I rely especially upon Heavenly aid--then I watch and pray, and am thus forewarned against

the temptations.

Doubtless in the end of this Age--in the closing days of this Gospel Dispensation--there will come Gethsemane experiences to the Church of Christ. Those who will stand those temptations and trials, and come off victorious, will be the ones whose faith and trust in the Lord are strong--those who watch and pray lest they enter into temptation, and who are thus safeguarded against it. As our Lord forewarned St. Peter and the other Apostles of their coming trial, so He has forewarned us of the great crucial test near at hand. Let us profit by the experiences of the Apostles recorded in this lesson."

R4168 "LEST ANY ROOT OF BITTERNESS SPRING UP" How is it now? The night of trouble nearing, the hour of trial that shall try all that dwell upon the face of the whole earth coming close, and with the many warnings of the Master through the Word that we should watch and pray lest we enter into temptation!--how is it with us? Alas! many of those who, like Peter, James and John, have been specially favored of the Lord, especially near to him, fail to realize the importance of the time in which we are living, fail to realize that the foretold temptations are about to come upon them and that, like Peter, they will be in great danger of being swept away, sifted out from amongst the Lord's faithful.

We can imagine our Lord's condition to some extent. His great hour of trial was upon him; he realized it to the full; it meant not only that his own faithfulness, past and present and on the day following, would decide respecting his loyalty to the Father and his right to obtain the high reward of glory, honor and immortality, but it meant additionally that the interests of the whole world of mankind were in the balance! Victory would mean eventually the deliverance of all the prisoners in bondage to sin and death; failure would mean the loss of everything! Can we wonder that his soul was exceeding sorrowful, and that in his intensity of feeling bloody perspiration oozed from his pores? Ah, dear Master! Well was it written of him, "Of the people there was none with me." Even his most intimate and most beloved disciples failed to appreciate the conditions and to render him the sympathetic aid which he craved. What would

those disciples afterward not have given to have had back the opportunity of ministering to their Lord in his hour of trial! What a privilege they let slip! There is a lesson here for us also, for although the Master is not in the flesh and will suffer no more, some of his members are still in the flesh, some who must suffer with him if they would reign with him. Our sufferings are not all just like those of the Master, nor are they just the same with each of us; each has his own experiences to prove, to test, to fit, to polish him that he may be made meet for the Master's use. Have we, each for the other, that sympathy, that yearning love which would lead us to help one another and to bear one another's burdens and thus to fulfil the Law of Christ, the Law of Love? or have we the Judas spirit to injure? or have we the spirit of slothful indifference and lack of appreciation which would lead us to slumber while the interests of others of the Body are at stake, while the brethren are suffering and are in trial? Our practical answer to these questions the Lord is looking for, and his love and his favor will be upon those who manifest most of his Spirit. To us much has been given, in that the hour of testing along these lines comes to us after we have received the anointing of the holy Spirit. Of us correspondingly more will be expected -- "We ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren."

R4488 "OFFENDED BECAUSE OF ME"

So far as our Lord's personality was concerned, we may be sure there was no cause of offense in him; he did nobody harm, but did everybody good. It was his doctrines that offended the people, and not his personality; nevertheless, their resentment was against his personality rather than against his doctrines, which were too strong for them to attack.

On one occasion we remember when they took up stones to stone him, Jesus expostulated with them, saying, I have done a good work and ye all marvel. Why, then, are you about to stone me? They answered that it was not for anything personal, but because of his doctrine. The Adversary deluded them, and made the words of him who spake as never man spake to *appear false* and God-dishonoring, whereas they were very true.

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.

Our Lord said, "Marvel not if the world hate you; ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own. But now ye are not of the world, because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." This implies that in proportion as we follow closely in the Master's footsteps our experiences will be proportionately similar to his. We shall be hated, not because of evil deeds to others, but because whoever is out of harmony with the truth of God's Word will be out of harmony with those who speak the truth, and verily think that they do God a service in opposing them.

Notice also that the *world* that will hate you is not the heathen world, not the Gentile world, but the worldly who pose as God's people. This was so with Jesus. He preached, not to the Gentiles, but to the holy nation of the Jews, God's consecrated people. And those who hated him and delivered him unto death were of his own nation, and even Judas of his own disciples. So we also should expect, in harmony with our Lord's words, that the worldly who will hate us will be the worldly-spirited ones, adversaries prominent in the Church, and some of them, perhaps, close to us as fellow-disciples.

Seeing these things in advance, being thus fore-warned, shall we not be fore-armed, so that none of these experiences may move us from our constancy and faithfulness?...

Watching and praying will cultivate confidence and faith in God, and preserve us from the trepidation and fear and stumbling which will surely upset many others; because from this standpoint of faith we shall know how to apply in our own time and under our own circumstances our Lord's words to Pilate, "Thou couldst have no power at all over me except it were permitted of my Father." God is still at the helm, and is still working all things according to the counsel of his own will. It is for us to come close to the Lord and to wait for the development of his plan with absolute confidence and fearlessness--except in the sense that we should fear to leave undone anything directed in his Word... The Lord will give us succor and "grace to help in every time of need."

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, corresponds 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, 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.

* 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.

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 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

[1] ½ Jan. 22 Manna, Psa. 31:24

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 accused of God; and if accused 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 hour 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