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## WATCH AND PRAY.

“Watch ye, therefore, and pray ,always, that ye may lie accounted worthy’ to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”—Luke 21:36.

The thought in this passage of Scripture is that we should be awake and vigilant. Why are we to e awake? and what are we to be vigilant about? The previous verses of this chapter ref the signs of the times and also state: “Take heed to yourselves that your heart he not overcharged with drunkenness and cares of this life, and so that day should not come upon you unawares.”

In Matt. 24:42 we have the statement, “Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord cloth come.” To make sure that the Church may feel this exhortation as a necessity upon them to the end of the age our Lord added, “And what I say unto you I say unto all, watch!”—Mark 13:37. Again He said, “Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching ; verily I say unto you that He shall gird Himself and make them to sit clown to meat and will come forth and serve them. And if He shall come in the second watch or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. Be ye therefore, ready also, for the Son of Man cometh an hour when ye think not. Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning.” That the primitive congregation lived in great anticipation of this event is manifest from many Scriptures-1 John 2:18; 2 Thes. 2:1-5.

The Apostle Paul, when he had almost finished his course, looked forward to this event as the culmination of his hopes and those of all the saints when he said, “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge. shall give me at that clay; and not to me only but to all them also that love His appearing.”- 2 Tim. 4:8. To him the appearing of the Lord was the crowning point of his existence, and his one concern was to be found approved of Him.

Some professed Christians give it no thought and do not trouble to watch for His appearing. The object of the establishment -of the Kingdom, the exaltation of the Church and the blessing of the world has been overlooked and also nullified by erroneous doctrines which have been accepted and have subverted the truth. In this state of mind and under the delusions of various errors, it has been concluded by others that it is no use trying to discover the time of our Lord’:,; return for that cannot be known, and to support this thought quote His words, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath! put in His own power” (Acts 1:7) ; also “-Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.” Is it reasonable to conclude from these’ words that neither the

Lord's people, nor even the Son, would ever know the times and seasons of God's appointment? Decidedly not. Because the time was long according to human reckoning and a knowledge of it would therefore have been discouraging, it was kept secret, not only from the Church, but also for the same reason from angels and even from our Lord Jesus while in the flesh .and must continue so until the proximity of the event renders the knowledge of the time no longer ally cause of discouragement, hut, on the contrary, the revival of hope and anticipation.

Our Lord's own words after His resurrection were, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." There was, then, no need to keep from Him the truths that were previously hidden to a large extent, for His cross-bearing had ended and His glory begun. Our Lord must have also known much of many events when their time drew near, because He knew when His hour was come ; and no doubt those truly living in close communion with Him will know very near the time when the final events are about to be fulfilled.

As it is shown that the disciples received power and enlightenment after the Holy 'Spirit came upon them, so the same influence of the Lord dwelling in His true feet members will enable them to closely discern the realities; and it was to the intent that the Lord's people might know when God would see fit to reveal His times and seasons that the waiting Church was told to watch.

The injunction to watch implies not only some advantages in watching, but also that the manner of the Lord's second advent would he so contrary to the general expectation as to require some discernment on the part of the watchers. The advantages of watching have been to keep fresh in mind the inspiring hope of the Church, the reunion with Christ in glory, the reign with Him in His Kingdom and the privileges of co-operating in the blessing of all the world, thus keeping the heart in love and harmony with the Lord and His work.

Thus at our Lord's coming those who were watching would have revealed to them the secret of His presence, and he found in readiness to sit down to meat and be served by the Lord Himself. As at the 'first advent He was present some time before His presence was declared and recognised, so at His second advent. His presence only 'began to be known as' He drew the attention of the watchers to it by the developing signs recorded in His Word. 'Of course it is only the truly spiritually-minded who will 'believe and act upon it. Was it not so at His first advent? When it was declared then, how few there were that believed. The opportunity to doubt His declaration was permitted to sift out the true followers, the same as at His second advent. At that time some that followed for a time took exception to some of His words and said, "This is a hard saying, who can understand it?" and they followed no more with Him. We have the same conditions to-day, some who have previously accepted the thought of His presence no longer believe it; the thought comes in, that as wickedness still prevails there must 'be some mistake.

To their minds things continue as they were. The thought is : "Where is the promise of His presence." It has become a hard saying to these and is no longer appreciated or approved. Then there are some who think that methods must now be changed, and the old truths, he taught no more. 'Others, again, make the mistake of thinking that they must watch for the appearing of our Lord again in the flesh, in the body of humiliation; to see Him. descend from heaven in the literal clouds and to hear a literal trumpet announcing His presence. Have these been watching and praying as the Lord directed? No; it would seem that such have 'been watching for events to transpire according to their own ideas, and have failed to appreciate the special signs the Lord has given to mark His presence at the end of this age. How necessary that all sincere believers need to "watch and pray, lest they enter into temptation," the temptations of the adversary who is ever ready to make suggestions and becloud the truth from the spiritual understanding of the Lord's people. Those who watch unto "the sure word of prophecy" which shineth as a light in a dark place know that "though we have known Christ after the flesh yet now henceforth know we Him (so) no more."

Those who have 'been watching unto prayer, and thus keeping their hearts in a humble, teachable attitude, are able to realise His presence, and in His light to read with\_ unclouded vision the wonderful working of the Divine plan of the ages, and to see the duties and privileges of the hour. To do these duties we are advised to watch and pray always that we may be accounted worthy to escape all these things, the snares, false reasonings and misunderstandings of the sure word, and thus be able to stand 'before Him.

Is it not written respecting these perilous times developing more and more, "who shall be able to stand?" And the answer, "He that bath clean hands and a pure heart." Those who have abided in Him as a 'branch of the true vine will be able to bring forth fruit, acceptable to the Lord, and may therefore be accounted worthy to stand. Those who will meet the Master's approval in this day of His presence must not only believe into Him, but also manifest their faith and love in proper service. These must be wise and faithful servants, who study to show themselves approved unto God, rightly dividing the Word of truth ; servants who are anxious not only about the amount of service, but also that it shall be exactly in co-operation with God, directed by His Word, controlled by His principles, and faithfully performed with an eye single to His glory.

The Scriptures say, "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord at His coming shall find so doing, verily He shall appoint him over all His possessions." The whole storehouse of Divine truth shall be open to such to, be ministered by them to others of the household of faith. This is the present reward of the wise and faithful servants in the time of His presence, and thus they begin to enter into the joys of their Lord now, of being taken into full confidence with God, of comprehending His deep and wise designs and co-operating in them. But the fullness of joy will be when they pass beyond the wail of death, and are made like Him and see Him as He is.

We need to watch and pray always that, though being thus blessed, we take heed against a possible falling away from such a favoured condition. As long as we are in the flesh we will have to war against its sinful propensities. With an increase of knowledge of these things, pride may assert itself, or arrogate to self the honour of finding out God, and by losing sight of the great reward of faithfulness at the end of the present pathway of humiliation and sacrifice, seek to gratify fleshly ambition with the prestige gained by the knowledge of truth. Such may begin to eat and drink with the drunken, to imbibe fanciful ideas developing more and more the spirit of selfishness, and to become more or less intoxicated with it ; they are apt to smite their fellow-servants and act tyrannically over those who are faithful. The only proper course for the Lord's people at any time is to have no confidence in the flesh and to watch against its old ambitions under all circumstances, watching and praying lest we enter into temptation.

How thankful we can be that we have received and been blessed with the high privileges of Divine grace in the knowledge of spiritual truths. What a consolation and pleasure it affords when we can realise that God's leadings and counsel have been with us this far all the way, and His promises are that He will never leave or forsake such as walk humbly and sincerely watch for His guidance and do not lean upon the understanding of man. How appropriate are the words of the Psalmist, "Delight thyself also in the Lord and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass."

The comforting assurance for God's people is that the great Watchman of spiritual Israel changes not. His exceeding great and precious promises are all yea and amen to those who obey Him.; to all who by faith abide in Him, trusting in the all-prevailing power of His merit, and who, possessing His spirit of love, are seeking to walk circumspectly' in His footsteps.

The Apostle, seeking to encourage the hope and faith of God's people in His time, and to buoy them up in the midst of the tests and trying conditions which tended to beat their courage down, said, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." In harmony with this same thought he continues, "The night is

far spent, the day is at hand, let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armour of light." In consideration of the fact that more than four thousand years were then in the past, and less than two thousand remained, he could well say, "the night is far spent"—the day of Christ is approaching. With what greater emphasis may the Church now realise that her salvation is nearer, as it is observed that these remaining two thousand years of man's history are almost accomplished. Yet, however near we may be to the full dawning, the full sunlight of the morning, however much we may long for the promised deliverance, the fact must be acknowledged by the evidences all around, that we are still living in the dark time of the prevalence of evil, still living in the enemy's land. We should remember that the resources and agencies of the Adversary are numerous and powerful, and that all need to guard well their Christian walk, the armour entrusted to them, taking heed to their ways that they be not ensnared by any of the sophistries and deceptions of this evil day.

As we move forward toward the goal it is well to have clearly before the mind the important necessities of the Christian life. Surely they are much the same for God's people at the present time as they have 'been all along. in the past. It is still the lesson of faith, of obedience, of loyalty to the will of God, and the consecration vow; these all need to be kept prominently and constantly 'before the mind of every follower of Christ who would live the victorious life. Patient endurance, waiting upon the Lord, and watching unto prayer are amongst the important lessons of our day. The Psalmist (2 7:14) says : "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage and He shall strengthen thine heart : wait I say on the Lord." Let us watch and pray and wait upon the Lord to bring in the great consummation.

In the meantime may we endure patiently the various conditions and circumstances incident to the passing away of the old order and the-introduction of the new ; let us make as straight a path for our feet as Possible, with what privileges we have at our disposal, and lean only upon Him, irrespective of what others may think, say, or do. To our own Master we stand or fall. The true servants of God to-day take their position with those of past ages who sought to understand and diligently searched "to know what or what manner of time the spirit of Christ did signify when it testified beforehand the suffering of Christ and the glory that should follow."

While the Lord has generally not granted full information regarding the times and seasons for one or another of His operations, He has. never rebuked any of His devoted servants for desiring and seeking such information. Faithful children of God are exhorted to give heed to the more sure word of prophecy that they might be in possession of important information, long ago foretold by the prophets. Let us be careful that it is the sure word of prophecy to which we are giving heed, and not any fancied interpretations claimed to be of the Word, which, however, are not according to true knowledge. Here is the need for true meekness and humble-mindedness that we may discern the Lord's guidance, for only the meek will He guide in judgment and teach His ways.

While therefore the sober and reverent watching and study of the prophetic page in connection with the signs of the times is to be commended, the disposition on the other hand to launch out into certain speculations is to be discouraged. We have no authority to assume the role of time prophets, to declare the date when this or that will come to pass, but should ever realise that our walk is of faith and use such means as will best help us to fulfil our covenant of sacrifice. The solemn lesson before the Lord's children to-day is that it is only the foundation of God "that standeth sure." Our Lord admonished His disciples to watch, to give heed in order that they might not be in ignorance of what was coming to pass, and thus be found prepared to receive the blessings that He would bring. May we watch and pray that we be not led into the temptation of formulating new theories, but may we continue by faith in the things of which we have been fully assured.

How important it is for the Lord's followers to be faithful in doing His will, in rendering their service according to the instructions of His Word. All grateful and obedient children of God will desire to let their

light shine and in so doing they will be careful that the message they announce is thoroughly established as the truth. Let us therefore watch and pray that we give diligence to make our calling and election sure ; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

You are greatly mistaken if you think that to be a Christian is merely to have certain views and convictions and spiritual delights. This is all well; but if it leads not to a devoted life, I fear it is a delusion. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."—McCheyne.

#### PEOPLES PAPER.

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While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord's Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression , either in the correspondence or in the sermons reported.

A Cross (x) on the wrapper indicates that the Subscription to " Peoples Paper" is overdue.

## TO PUT YOU IN REMEMBRANCE.

“Though ye know and be established in the present truth.”--2 Pet. 1:12.,

While the matter of being able to appreciate that we are living “in the days of the Son of Man” or the second presence of Christ, also of how we understand the “changed in a moment,” is not so fundamental as the decidedly anti-ransom theory of “Universalism.,” yet it is good to know the present truth, and there is the ‘blessing promised ill the appreciation of the second presence of our Lord, as a glorious spirit ‘being, in the “express image of the Father’s person.” The gathering of His elect from, the four winds of heaven and dealing with His people—the Church—is in accord with the two parables—the Ten Virgins, which indicates the condition of the watchers at the time of arrival, and the Talents, showing the work of Christ among His people, prior to the time when I He will manifest His great power and control the poor “groaning creation.”—Rom. 8:1 9-22.

The Greek word “parousia” occurs in the following references :—Matt. 24:3, 27, 37, 39 ; 1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Cor. 16:17; 2 Cor. 7:6, 7; 2 Cor. 10:10; Phil. 1:26; Phil. 2:12 ; 1 Thess. 2:19; 1 Thess. 3:13; 1 Thess. 4 : I 5 ; 1 Thess. 5:23 ; 2 Thess. 2:1, 8, 9; Jas. 5:7, 8; 2 Pet. 1:16; 2 Pet. 3:4,12; 1 John 2:28. It is badly translated “coming” in the King James’ Version, in all but two instances (2 Cor. 10:10 and Phil. 2:12), where it is translated “presence” where it could hardly be translated by any other English word. In fact, every occurrence of the word parousia can be reasonably rendered “presence,” which seems to be the only English word that will express the meaning. All Greek scholars seem to agree that “presence” is the English equivalent of the Greek word “parousia.”

Then read Matt. 24:37-39 : “As the days of Noah were so shall also the ‘presence’ of the Son of Man be.” “For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying; and giving in marriage until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away ; so shall also the presence of the Son of Man be.”

In the preceding verses our Lord said it would not be possible to locate Him in any one place, for His presence would not be like that of a man to be seen face to face, but like the sunshine, the rising of the “Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings.” It is unreasonable to say that the “bright shining” out of the east unto the west refers to lightning and “so shall the presence of the Son of Man be.” How could a flash of lightning symbolise “presence” or “the days of the Son of Man”?

After the breaking of the persecuting powers of Papal Rome there was to occur just what has taken place—the darkening of the sun, the dimming of the Gospel message by Evolution and Higher Criticism, in the pulpits; and the “moon”—the Law—does not give its light. Its ceremonies are not understood and its sacrifices, “shadows of good things to come,” are referred to as old pagan institutions. Then comes the “sign of the Son of Man in the heavens.” Satan is referred to as the “prince of the power of the air”; he has been ruling in the religious or ecclesiastical heavens. Now Christ has come to take control of religious matters, first dealing with those who look for His appearing and kingdom. He is surely judging among His people and rewarding them according to the use of talents entrusted to them.

If Christ were to be visible to all, there would be no need of a “sign” that He had come, that He was there “in the heavens.” The sign in the heavens appears to ‘be the gathering of the elect from, the four winds of heaven. a harvesting work, in the Christian world. For He shall send His angels (messengers) with a great sound of a trumpet (not for the world to hear) to attract, to gather His elect. The voice of the trumpet is the present truth proclamation. “One shall be taken, one shall he left,” and in Luke 17:34-37 the disciples asked, “Where, Lord?” And He said unto them, “Wheresoever the body is flier,’ will the eagles be gathered together.” ( See also 24:28.) So it is, “blessed are they that hunger after righteousness for they shall be ‘filled.” It is the feast of Luke 12:37 and Rev. 3:20 to which the messengers have invited those

who are watching for Him.

So the trumpet sounds “in the days of the Son of Man,” and in Rev. 10:7 we read “in the days of the voice of the seventh (trumpet) messenger, when he shall begin to sound.” It is not just a ‘blast of a trumpet, any more than it is a flash of lightning, that symbolises the Lord’s presence ; it is, “in the days” of the sounding of this trumpet by the seventh messenger that the mystery is to be finished. The plan is to be made plain and the Church completed, for during this time when the trumpet of God shall sound the dead in Christ shall rise first. and during the same time those that still remain in the flesh shall be caught away as they finish their course to be together with the Lord in the air.

All who are baptised into Christ are baptised into His death. just as the first veil to enter the Tabernacle signified our consecration to death as human beings, he passing under the second veil indicated the actual death of the human being. The “New creature,” like the great High Priest, Christ, must leave behind the human nature. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom, and the bodies of those beasts, whose blood was brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. “. . . Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp.” “As many as are baptised into Jesus Christ are baptised into His death.” “But blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from, henceforth . . .”—Rev. 14:13.

But “behold I show you a mystery, we shall not all sleep (be in a state of sleep, though we must all die), but we shall all be changed in a moment, in a twinkling of the eye at the last trumpet, for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed”—1 Cor. 15:52, 54. In verse 54 “corruptible” seems to refer to the dead who are raised “incorruptible,” and mortal to those still alive who are to be changed to be immortal.

## Biblical Plants.

Jerusalem’s Botanical Garden.

(By PG.G.)

Cedars of Lebanon, oaks of the same species as the mighty tree called “Abraham’s oak.” and many other species of trees are to grow in the new botanical garden of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, to play a part in an ambitious programme sponsored by the University, aiming at the re-establishment of forests in ‘Palestine.

Besides the trees, according to a statement in the New York weekly journal, “Science,” there will be an abundance of smaller plants, many of them famous in Biblical literature; “the hyssop that groweth on the wall,” the “lilies of the field,” the “mustard tree” that grows from “the least of seeds.” The aim of Dr. A. Big is to assemble in this garden as complete a collection as possible of all the floras of Near Eastern countries, from Iraq to Sinai, and out into the desert beyond the Jordan. It is necessary to act quickly in some localities, for the western methods of cultivation introduced by the new colonists are destroying many species spared by the “scratchy” agriculture of the Arabs, and the necessary draining of malaria marshes is depriving other native plants of their old rootholds

The garden occupies the summit and part of the slopes of Mount Scopus, a high hill whence Roman conquerors once looked on the city they had beaten down. For all its historic associations, however, Mount Scopus is not an ideal spot for a botanical garden, for, like most of the hill land in Palestine, it is thin-soiled and lacks water. These considerations helped to determine Dr. Eig’s decision to plant the resistant native plants first, and let the costlier, more exacting foreign species wait until more funds are

available.

One section of the garden is to be left with its native vegetation untouched, to see whether some of the stunted trees of the “maqui” will not develop into useful specimens if left for some years unpersecuted by necessitous peasants, who dig up even insignificant shrubs for fuel. “Maqui” is the vegetation natural to a considerable part of Palestine and the Near East ; it is a tangled mass of mixed shrubs, very much like the “chaparral” of the American south-west.

Reminiscent, too, of the American south-west, the paper mentions, is one tree that is proving a great success in Palestine—the eucalyptus. This tree from the Antipodes has become so usual a landmark of the new settlements of Zionists that the Arabs call it “Sejeret el Jahud,” which means “the Jewish tree.”

The new garden will be, known as the Lamport Botanical Garden. The land was donated to the Hebrew University by Solomon Lamport, of New York City, in memory of his young son Montague.—”Sydney Herald.”

## Correspondence,

Berean Biblical Institute,

Dear Christian Friend,

Yours received in due time. I was pleased to have your helpful, cheering letter, also enclosed papers, and thank you for them. I enjoy all Berean literature, and have read some “Heralds” which Sister recently sent me and which

gave me much pleasure. I have many happy hours study among my books and papers and can say with the poet, “Praise God from whom all blessings flow.”

I am sending you by this snail two books, “The New Creation” and “The Atonement.” I have given several other volumes to friends. God bless you and help you with the great work. With Christian love,

Your sister in Christ, R.H.

Tasmania,

13th September, 1932.

Dear Brother,

Loving Christian greetings in our dear Saviour's name. It was indeed kind of you to write us such a nice letter when we lost our little girl. It is hard, indeed, to part with those that are dear to us, but we realise it is all in our Heavenly Father's hands; He knows what is best, and we know "that all things work together for good," and so we humbly bow to His will. "Thy will be done." It is such a loss, but we would not call our little one back again even if we could, but rejoice now to know that our little one will escape the great time of trouble that is even now overtaking the poor world. What a crash there will be when law and order are gone and anarchy is in full force. We can only thank our Heavenly Father that our dear little one sleeps in Jesus until the resurrection morn, and to think of her coming again from the land of the enemy in that clay. What a grand thought it is, dear brother, to think that if we are faithful unto death it may be our lot as members of The Christ, "the seed of Abraham," to awaken those who are near and dear to us, and bring them again to their own border with a new body such as it pleases our Lord to give. How sustaining and helpful it is in our time of trial and difficulty to place our every' burden on the great Burden-bearer, and to rest secure in the knowledge that "The Lord is our shepherd, and we shall not want."

As perhaps you know, Bro, — is coming to stay with us, and, of course, we are pleased to have him. We will do all we can to make our dear Bro. comfortable and happy, and he will be a great help to our little class. We are looking forward to having a real feast of fat things around the Word.

The text for to-day is lovely—Psa. 133:1.

We are confident, dear Bro., the love of Christ will hold us together, and that we shall dwell together in real unity. Enclosed, please find P/N for —, being payment of books received, which I believe is the amount owing by me. Re book, "Bro. Russell's Sermons," yes, Sister — would like one, so you may send one along just when it suits you. Have you any "Desolations of the Sanctuary," by the two German Bros.? If so, would you send me one.

Will close now, dear Bro., with much Christian love from your Bro. and Sister, by His Grace,

—D.C.P.

New Zealand,

September 14, 1932. Berean Biblical Institute,

Dear Sirs,

Thank you very much for your nice friendly letter. I was more than satisfied with the Bible Dictionary, and thought it was very reasonable. I should be pleased to receive the "People's Paper" each month for a year, as it contains some very interesting reading, and the poems are very beautiful and helpful.

Thanking you once more for your kindness, Yours, happily in Christ,

Mrs.—

Queensland,

September 10, 1932. Dear Bro.,

Again I take my pen to address you, thanking God for His goodness and manifold blessings bestowed from time to time.

I am forwarding P/N 2/6 for "P.P." as promised. If you have any books entitled, "The Battle of Armageddon," "The New Creation," "The Time is at Hand," "Thy Kingdom Come," or "The Atonement Between God and Man," please let me know the prices.

I thank you very much for offering to loan me "The Divine Plan of the Ages," but father has a copy, and I have the use of it. I would like the loan of Bro. Russell's Sermons if you could possibly let me have them.

With sincere Christian greetings for the present, I will close, trusting God will direct us ever onward in the way of truth and life,

I remain, a fellow-servant,

—G.B.A.

## CAPERNAUM.

How blest the city which was called "His own,"  
The home of Jesus Christ; happy the street

Which knew the echo of His sandalled feet,  
The light of His familiar face, the tone

Of His most gentle voice; happy each stone  
And timber of that dwelling, which His sweet

"Peace to this house" was daily wont to greet,  
When His clear shadow on the door was thrown.

Jesus, who standeth knocking at my door  
Seeking a home in this poor heart of mine,

Oh! lift the latch—enter for evermore;  
Here let Thy voice be heard, make Thy face to shine,

And breathe Thy peace, while gratefully I sing  
The love and condescension of my King.

—R.W. (M.A.)

Buy up the moments as they go;  
Sow love, and taste its fruitage pure;  
Sow peace, and reap its harvest bright;  
Sow sunbeams on the rock and moor,  
And find the harvest-home of light.  
Deeply rooted, Lord, in Three,  
Now and ever let me be;  
Let my roots still deeper grow  
'Neath the surface far below.  
Thus, while founded on the Rock,  
I need fear no tempest's shock;  
I would be built up in Thee  
Hither rise—till God I see.

## ”ARE YE ABLE.”

“Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?”—Matt. 20:22.

WE recall the circumstances under which these words were uttered by our Saviour. It was just a few days before His crucifixion. Jesus had promised His disciples that they should sit with Him in His throne in His Kingdom. So confident were they that this would be as the Lord had said, that they were discussing the positions they might occupy. The mother of the two disciples, James and John, came to Him and asked whether her two sons might sit, the one on His right hand and the other on His left in the Kingdom. And Jesus, turning to the two disciples, replied by asking them: “Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?”

We know, that Jesus’ baptism in water took place at the beginning of His ministry. In harmony with the Divine plan, He was to die as the Saviour of men, and He symbolised this death as soon as He was thirty years of age—as soon as was possible under the Law. During the three and a half years of His ministry He was accomplishing this baptism, He was pouring out His soul unto death, and this death He finished at Calvary. Jesus said, “The baptism that I am (being) baptised with”—now—not a baptism which was either future or past.

But He spoke differently of the cup—”the cup that I shall drink of.” He thus implied that the cup was future—not in the present nor in the past. He had told His disciples that He would go up to Jerusalem, and that there He would be crucified, and on the third day He would rise again. And He said on another occasion, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.” What the Master said about His being crucified the disciples did not understand; but Jesus understood the situation, and knew that this cup was about to be poured for Him. And so He spoke of it again, saying of Himself, “The cup that My Father hath poured for Me, shall I not drink it?”

### OUR LORD’S SPECIAL TRIAL.

We might think of the word cup as representing various experiences of life—that everybody has his cup of mingled joy and sorrow. But Jesus used the word in a different sense. When He was in the Garden of Gethsemane He prayed,

“( ) My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” And again, the same night He prayed, saying, “O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me except I drink it, Thy will be done!” In the matter of His baptism into death, there was no hesitation on our Lord’s part; on the contrary, from the very beginning He voluntarily participated in it. The ignominious death was the thing that He prayed might pass, if it were possible. But this was what He learned was the Father’s will for Him, and He was content to have it so.

There was nothing in the Law to indicate that our Lord should be executed as a blasphemer of the Divine Law, yet blasphemy was the charge preferred against Him. The Sanhedrin decided that He was a blasphemer in, that He had said, “Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it again,” and also in claiming that He was the Son of God. Apparently, then, the thing which was specially weighing on His mind and from which He would have liked to be relieved was the ignominy and shame of being crucified as a criminal. as a blasphemer of the Father He loved so well.

Jesus knew that He had come into the world to die, and that He must suffer, but this part of His experience He had not fully understood. Evidently He knew that “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,” for comparatively early in His ministry He had stated this in His conversation with Nicodemus. But as He came down nearer and nearer to the time of

His humiliation, His degradation, and realised all that it meant, He felt a great shrinking from it and poured out His heart in the cry, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me!" lint immediately—proving that His declaration at the time of His consecration, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God," was not empty words—He added, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt !"—Matt. 26:39.

#### ARE WE WILLING TO SHARE HIS IGNOMINY ?

And so to His disciples our Saviour said: Are you able to lay down your lives completely, even though this shall mean to you injustice in the taking away of Your lives? Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of ? There will be disgrace and ignominy connected with it all. Are ye willing to share with Me in this, My cup? They answered ::

"We are able." They were willing.

This, we see, is the same cup represented in the Communion Service. The bread represents the body and the wine the blood of our Lord. The cup especially represented the shame and ignominy connected with His death ; and the two disciples said that they were willing to share His cup—they had no hesitancy. At any cost they would be faithful. They would comply with any conditions He would make. They did not, of course, yet know the full import of the word baptism or of the word cup. These were things all His disciples were feeling after. When Pentecost should come, these things that Jesus had spoken to them would come to their remembrance, as He had foretold. (John 16:4; 13:19.) But they were willing and anxious. And that is all that we can be. Jesus guaranteed that being willing, they should reign with Him in His Throne. But as to the particular place for each in the Throne, that would not be for Him to say, but for the Father.

The courage, the fortitude, of our dear Redeemer in walking the narrow way 'fills us with admiration. How strong and brave was His character' He had no thought of looking back ; His whole being was intent upon accomplishing the will of His Father in Heaven—upon sacrificing Himself in the interest of the world. What a noble example was set before the Apostles !—greatness in humility, victory through entire self-surrender!

#### DRINKING OF THE LORD'S CUP BY THE CHURCH.

The drinking of the Lord's cup by the Church represents our participation in the sufferings of Christ in the present time. None shall be a member of the Body of the great Mediator of the New Covenant unless he come in now under the proper terms. The drinking of the blood, then, is the sharing of the cup. For if we drink not of His cup, neither shall we share with Him in His glory. He said, "Drink ye all of it." All must drink, and the entire cup must be drained during this age.

It is a very great privilege that we are permitted to have a share in the sufferings of Christ. "If we suffer (with Him), we shall also reign with Him." We shall participate in the inauguration of the New Dispensation, and in dispensing its blessings. The -Anti-type of Moses, who will do the sprinkling, is Christ the Head and the Church His Body, glorified, of whom we read in Acts 3:22: "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, a Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me."—that is, Moses was His type, on a smaller scale. The Body is now being raised up. Jesus was first raised up, then all the Apostles; and following after, the remaining members of His Body.

As Moses sprinkled all the people, so this antitypical Moses, when completed, will "sprinkle" the world of mankind; -and this will mean the 'bringing of them into harmony with the Divine Law. It will require the thousand years to "sprinkle" mankind. So there is a great difference between the drinking of the cup and the sprinkling of the blood.

The sprinkling with the blood represents justification, while the drinking of the cup by the Church represents, not only justification, but sanctification.

#### OUR LORD'S RECOGNITION OF THE DIVINE PURPOSES.

Our Lord, in His memorable words to St. Peter: "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"—referred, evidently, to His dying experiences, which were severe in the extreme. He was dishonoured of men and reckoned as an enemy of God—a blasphemer. His physical sufferings He knew would be intense, but to His perfect mind the shame and disesteem added greatly to the poignancy of His anguish. Yet this was the cup the Father had given Him; it was the Divine purpose respecting Him.

Our Lord had all the experiences necessary for proving and testing His loyalty; for it was necessary that He manifest

His loyalty before both angels and men. The whole matter had been divinely arranged from before the creation of man. He was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Rev. 13:8.) Everything pertaining to that slain Lamb was foreknown by the Father. Jesus was to drink the cup which belonged to the sinner in order that He might redeem man and might thus be a faithful and merciful High Priest.

This was the cup of suffering and death. It was necessary that Jesus should suffer the death of the cross, in order that He might redeem the Jew.

#### . LOVE AND LOYALTY MANIFESTED BY SUBMISSION.

All His sufferings were foretold in the Scriptures. The crucifixion was pictured by the lifting up of the brazen serpent in the wilderness. All of His experiences were foreknown, forearranged and necessary. When He came to earth to do the Father's will. He did not know of all that was to come. But He learned obedience by the things which He suffered, the things which were "written in the Book." He submitted Himself to all the Father's will, and thus He proved His loyalty. As He Himself declared, "I came not to do Mine own will, but the will of My Father which sent Me!" As the hour of the consummation of His sacrifice drew near, in the lonely shades of Gethsemane, the Master prayed, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me!" We are not to suppose that He prayed for the cup of death to pass away; but He wondered whether or not the ignominious experiences of the crucifixion might pass. Yet we find that He did not murmur or rebel, but said, "Not My will, but Thine, be done!"

#### SPECIAL SUPERVISION OF OUR CUP.

We see that our beloved Lord drank of the bitter cup to its dregs, and did so thankfully. And we are to remember that He gave the cup to us, that we should all drink of, it not that we should all have exactly the same experiences that He had, but that we must all drink of the cup of suffering and death in the Father's own way. Jesus was the Perfect One, and the Father dealt with Him in a very particular manner.

In our cases the experiences would be different; because of our imperfection we could not be dealt with from the standpoint of perfection. We are, therefore, not to think of our cup as a definite, fixed programme as was the Master's, but rather that the Father permitted us to have a share in the cup of death with His Son. Our cup is supervised by our Saviour, although it is the cup poured by the Father; for it is the Father's programme.

In the Master's case the cup was necessary for the sins of the whole world. In our case it is not necessary, but it has pleased the Father to grant us a share in the sufferings and glory of our Lord. Jesus makes good

our deficiencies and develops our characters, fashioning us into His own glorious image. Without this supervision of our cup by our Lord, we might be very poorly developed in many qualities ; therefore our cup needs to be specially supervised. And so He assures us that, while the necessary experiences are coming to us. at the same time His grace will be sufficient, and His strength will be made perfect in our weakness, and all things will be made to work together for our good.

Let us never forget that unless we partake of His cup, unless we are immersed into death with Him, we can have no share in His Kingdom of glory, we can never sit with Him in His Throne, Let us then count all the things of this earth as loss and dross that we may attain this Pearl of Great Price. As the experiences of suffering come to us; let us not be afraid, nor “think it strange concerning the fiery trials that shall try us, as though some strange thing happened unto us” ; for even “hereunto were we called,” to suffer with our beloved Master now, and by and by be glorified together with Him in the Kingdom eternal!

“Are ye able to walk in the narrow, strait way,  
With no friend by your side, no arm for your stay?  
Can ye bravely go on through the darkening night?  
Can ye patiently wait ‘till the Lord sends the light ?

“Ah, if thus ye can drink of the Cup He shall pour,  
And if never the banner of Truth ye would lower,  
His beloved ye are, and His crown ye shall wear,  
In His Throne ye shall sit, and His glory shall share!”

## IN MY NAME.

“There were only two or three of us  
Who came to the place of prayer—  
Came in the teeth of a driving storm;  
But for that we did not care,

Since after our hymns of praise had risen,  
And our earnest prayers were said,  
The Master Himself was present there  
And gave us the living bread.

“We noted His look in each other’s face,  
So loving, and glad, and free:  
We felt His touch when our heads were bowed,  
We heard His ‘Come to Me!’

Nobody saw Him lift the latch,  
And none unbarred the door;  
But ‘Peace’ was His token in every heart,  
And how could we ask for more ?

“Each of us felt the relief from sin,  
Christ’s purchase for one and all;  
Each of us dropped his load of care,  
And heard the heavenly call;

And over our spirits a blessed calm  
Swept in from the Jasper Sea.  
And strength was ours for the toil of life  
In the days that were yet to be.

“It was only a handful gathered in  
To that little place of prayer.  
Outside were struggle and strife and sin,  
But the Lord Himself was there.

He came to redeem the pledge  
He gave Wherever His loved ones be,  
To give His comfort and joy to them  
Though they count but two or three.”

—Selected.

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