

"LEST YE ENTER INTO TEMPTATION."

"Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." – Mark 14:38.

IT seems peculiar that there should be greater liability of falling into sin at one season than at another; but nevertheless we have noticed for several years and have before called to the attention of others the *peculiar* force of temptations at the time of the Passover, every Spring. Year after year at this season we have noticed special liability of many or all to stumble or be offended. Let us, therefore, take earnest heed to our Lord's words, and earnestly watch and pray for others and for ourselves; and let each one be on his guard not to cast a stumbling-block before his brother. – Rom. 14:13; Heb. 2:1.

It was at the Passover season that our Lord said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Then many of his friends and followers said, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?...and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?" – John 6:4,51,60,66,67.

It was at the Passover season that Judas bargained for the betrayal of our Lord, – and a little later on accomplished it.

It was about the Passover season that our Lord said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." (Matt. 26:38.) "I have a baptism [death] to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!" – Luke 12:50.

It was about the Passover season that our Lord took the disciples and began to explain unto them that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of the chief priests and scribes and be put to death (Matt. 16:21); and then Peter was tempted to forget that he was the disciple, and took the Lord and began to rebuke him, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord. This

shall not be unto thee." Thus also he tempted our Lord to repudiate his sacrifice, and brought upon himself the rebuke – "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." – Verses 22,23.

It was while met to eat the Passover that the twelve got into a dispute as to which of them should be greatest in the Kingdom. They thus brought upon themselves our Lord's just rebuke, and induced the illustration of humility on his part by the washing of their feet.

It was when they had sung a hymn and gone out from the Passover that our Lord used to them the words at the head of this article, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation;" while he himself was in an agonizing battle, and with bloody sweat submitting his [R1637 : page 105] will to the will of God; and, praying earnestly, was strengthened. – Luke 22:39-46.

It was but a little later that the emissaries of the High Priest came upon them and the eleven all forsook the Lord and fled (Mark 14:50): the temptation, the fear, they could not resist.

It was but a little later that Peter and John, bolder than the others, went with the crowd into Pilate's court to see what would befall the Master; and Peter, being recognized as one of Christ's disciples, was tempted to *deny the Lord* with cursing. – Mark 14:68,70,71.

It was at the same time that our Lord was tempted before Pilate, but victoriously "witnessed a good confession." – 1 Tim. 6:13.

The temptations of our Lord followed rapidly. When his foes spat upon him, and crowned him with thorns, and reviled him, saying, "Let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God," he could have smitten them with disease or death; but, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. He overcame, and prayed for those who despitefully used him. – Luke 23:33-37.

He might even have concluded that he would not be the Redeemer of such thankless beings; but, while realizing that he could even then ask of the Father and receive the assistance of twelve legions of angels and overcome his enemies, he resisted the temptation. He *gave* himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

The death of our Lord was a great trial of faith to all the disciples, who straightway were tempted to go again to their old fishing business, and neglect the fishing for men. – John 21:3-17.

Paul and the other apostles subsequently had special trials at this special season also. See Acts 20:16; 21:10,11,27-36.

In view of all this in the past, as well as in view of our own experience since the present harvest began in 1874, we feel specially solicitous for the Lord's sheep every Spring; and this Spring is no exception. What may be the character of the temptations, we may not clearly discern until they are upon us; for if we knew all about them in advance they would be but slight temptations. Watch, therefore, and pray always; for the only safe way is to be prepared; because your adversary, the devil, is seeking whom he may devour. He knows your weak points, and is ready to take advantage of them. We will each need the graces of the spirit in our hearts, as well as the Lord's "grace to help in time of need" if we would overcome. "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation!"

"My soul, be on thy guard,
Ten thousand foes arise;
The hosts of sin are pressing hard
To draw thee from the prize."
