

Is Christianity Able?

Isa. 35:1-2.

Friday morning I was in this pulpit at an early hour...a sacred privilege to any one...and opened this good book and like the large headlines in a daily paper these two verses attracted my attention.....

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.

It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God." *use these lines*
like
must go back to 34th chapter

These verses impressed me as a very fitting passage with which to approach Easter. Some may disagree but I believe that this is a prophecy of the coming of the Kingdom of Christ.

* Here you are faced with the word WILDERNESS...a wild place with no people in it...a solitary place lonely and away from people. Life there is just wild life. Then the word desert. Which as you know is a place without people and even without vegetable life. These words give a wild, horrible, and desolate picture. But maybe a picture, when applied spiritually, not at all overdrawn, of the condition of the world when Jesus came and not over drawn for many parts of the world today...as we approach another Easter season.

But that was not to be the permanent picture of the world. The mysterious hand of a powerful painter was to touch it in its dark, lonely, and barren outlook and with a brush..Divine in its nature..dipped into heavens colors of heaven HE was to give it the glory of Lebanon, and the excellency of Carmel and Sharon.

what was the glory of Lebanon?
Look at Lebanon...three words describe it...Strong, great, beautiful. STRONG as a word used by itself does not necessarily mean much...a brute is strong...GREAT by itself does not have significance if the greatness is to mean only size...BUT STRONG...plus...GREAT...plus...real BEAUTY make the words to have a great wealth of meaning. In Lebanon there were the great cedars with their building qualities and materials. Their grandeur and beauty pointed to the skys...pointed heavenward. The little Mt streams continually trickling down the Mt. side kept the valleys fertile below. The wilderness with its vines, briars, reptiles and uselessness would be lifted up to have the glory of Lebanon.

The deserts, the picture of lifelessness, desertedness, and barren-ness would be watered, visited, and cultivated until they would be as Carmel which means the vineyard of God. It would be fruitful and blossom like the rose theus being as Sharon. JESUS was referred to as The Rose Of Sharon.

As we now approach Easter time we naturally think of what sin has done. Its wildness, its thorns that scar the flesh and its snake like poison. We think of Christ who was killed by it but who could not be held by it. We know that He arose... He was able. We are asking today "Is Christianity Able?"

Conditions in the world are bad indeed. We have a dark picture. It has the appearance of a wilderness and something of the barrenness of a desert. It needs a beauty that it does not have... Is Christianity able to cope with it? *(from his religion)*

What is the answer of history? We will learn in history that the eras when Christianity was best believed and the most sacrificially supported were the times of chaos such as we have now. Do you remember the story of Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox? Brer Rabbit said to the fox, "Throw me in the briar patch on the supposition that no more cruel thing could be done."

The fox did it and the rabbit ran away shouting, "Bred and bawn in a briar patch---Brer Fox..bred and bawn in a briar patch." So it was with Christianity it was bred and bawn in a briar patch..so to speak..such as we have to day. It started with a CROSS. It is no weak soup religion. How do these words sound to you to day? LISTEN..... *we have no much of a soup religion to day -*

"They were stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword, going about in sheepskins and goat skins, destitute afflicted, ill treated of whom the world is not worthy." The Great Founder of this religion said, "In the world ye have tribulation."

Poverty does something to people but at the other end of the pole wealth hurts maybe worse. Out standing eras of moral and spiritual insight for the Jews were times like that of the Exile... IN TIMES OF GREAT TRIAL THE DROSS SEEMS TO BE MELTED AWAY AND THE PURE METAL SHOWS UP. *most presumptions are there and tested to great pressure -*

The years right after the World War No I. were called good times...but tell me what were the characteristics of that period?

Gambling..loose living..decay of citizenship..collapse of personal integrity..desertion of religious faith.

This is not a bad time or impossible time for Christian religion for CHRISTIANITY was bawn in a briar patch..such as this.

One of America's greatest preachers has this to say.....

"Out of the despair of the Egyptian bondage came the hope of a free Hebrew people."

"Out of the despair of the Exile came the hope of a reconstituted Jewish state."

"Out of the despair of a falling Roman Empire came the hope of a universal church."

"Out of the despair of the tyrannical monarchy came the hope of Democracy."

Can we not say that out of the despair of this war there is the hope of a union of all the denominations as they work shoulder to shoulder with each other in the common cause of saving the world?

Our religion is the hope that comes out of despair the morning that is born out of the night, health that rises out of sickness, spring that comes out of winter, life that comes out of death. The greatest Christian faith in history is always like a Rembrandt portrait..an illuminated face shining out of a dark back ground.

" The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as a rose...
The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it."

These sacred verses give your answer to the question.....

"IS CHRISTIANITY ABLE?"

