

the truth; it stamped itself so by the very Word of God. And, oh, how I thanked him that at last I had the key that unlocked the wonderful treasures in his Word. In a few months I had left the Salvation Army. Few among its members, even my close friends, understand my position, but grieve over me as one who has been deceived by a "strong delusion." I rejoice that the light will soon come to them. Many of the young people do not know what has become of me, but in answer to their earnest inquiries have merely been told that "Cousin Sunshine is no more." I am very sorry to have grieved their young hearts, but must leave that, too, with the Lord.

My testimony up-to-date is that the Lord and his Truth are more precious to me than ever, and the pathway truly "shineth more and more." The vow, the covenants, etc., have been wonderful sources of strength and joy to me, and I praise him more and more for having granted me the great privilege of understanding as much as I do of the wondrous things that are written in his Word—"written for our admonition." (1 Cor. 10:11; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17.) Truly "He hath brought me into a large place," and my heart rejoices daily in his goodness to even me.

Pray for me, dear Pastor, that I may be faithful, and that even I may be "counted worthy to stand before the Son of Man."—Luke 21:36.

I remember you daily in my prayers, praising God for your faithfulness to the present time, and praying that you may so continue to the end of the way.

Your sister in the hope of immortality,

Mrs. A. I. RITCHIE.

(Formerly Staff-Captain Nina Maitland.)

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

About a year ago a paper, issued not far from my home, began the publication of your sermons. Of course, I was delighted that so many of my neighbors and friends would thus be brought within touch of the truth, which I so dearly love. Recently the sermon feature was discontinued. Then I thought me that I had not specially encouraged the publishers, nor told them of my deep interest in the matter. I supposed, however, that others had been more faithful than myself in this respect. I concluded that, although late, I would endeavor to retrieve my opportunity. I wrote to the publisher on the subject and felt vexed with myself and others that it was possible for the publisher to write to me as follows:—

"I do not know how many of our readers care for the sermons, but no one has complained of their discontinuance so far but you. This leads us to believe that they were not very popular with our readers. We never heard from anybody who did take pains to say that he cared for them."

I trust that this will be a lesson to me that I should not only pray for God's blessing upon the work, but also be on the alert to do my part to help forward his glorious message—however others may care to do their parts. With Christian regards,

Your brother and servant in the Lord.

IN REPLY

We sympathize with this case. There are others just like it, and probably will be more. Brethren and sisters, particularly those possessed of the talents of penmanship and of good expression, have a glorious opportunity for serving the truth, which many of them, we fear, do not properly appreciate until it has passed them by. It is apt to be thus with all of God's blessings.

Incidentally, let us remark that some dear friends send us newspaper subscriptions for friends and neighbors, without inquiring of them whether or not the gift of the paper would be acceptable. This is a serious mistake. The intended kindness becomes an injury if the favored one write to the news-

paper refusing it and declaring that he never ordered it. We have sent papers to some of the Lord's poor at the Society's expense—newspapers never do this, and thanks to them is wholly improper.

We would not reflect upon all the dear friends. Some are very thoughtful and are continually, every month or so, noting to the publishers some appreciated features of certain sermons and expressing their gladness that the Gospel is reaching the many who rarely attend church services. We might remark, however, that dear friends who are poor writers and very ungrammatical would serve the truth better by not writing much. It is the work of the gifted, who can serve the truth best along the lines of encouraging newspaper publishers, to do so. If they neglect the opportunity they will surely regret the matter sometime. Large weekly newspapers do not need special encouragement in the way of subscriptions; it is your nearly daily or smaller weekly that needs your subscriptions and those of your friends.

BRETHREN:—

I have seen the first number of your periodical (P. P. Spanish), and have pondered the contents in my heart. Glory be to God! In my position of preacher of the Gospel (30 years), I have not encountered such brilliant truths as I now see in the four pages of your blessed little paper. My mind, stupefied by human theories, has hindered perfect reasoning on the plan of God. Now all I see is clear, logical and true.

The article, "Where Are the Dead?" was for me a celestial light which let me see a glorious eternity. I am conducting amongst this people a Mexican Mission, attended by thirty to forty individuals; we keep no accurate account. I preach the Gospel to them and their characters have been modified so that they are now good men. Although I am an ordained minister of the Baptist church, I do not work in connection with them nor with any denomination. Last Sunday I preached a sermon on the theme of "Where Are the Dead?" and the congregation received this new light with great joy.

I have here a good friend, a Mr. John R——, with whom I conversed on this subject, and he told me more particularly about these things, so new to me, and which helped us here so much. Glory be forever to the blessed God and Father of our Lord Jesus!

From your brother in faith, j

C. TEZEDA Y VALDIVIA.

(Translated from the Spanish.)

DEAR BRETHREN IN CHRIST JESUS:—

I advise you that I have received a copy of the *Peoples Pulpit* (Italian), which treats on the subject of "Where Are the Dead?" and I read the same with pleasure. I desire that you do me the kindness of sending me other discourses along Scripture lines, because I aspire to be a helper in the Lord's work in the Italian field.

Your brother in Christ,

D. ANTANACCI.

(Translated from the Italian.)

"SOW BESIDE ALL WATERS!"

EDITOR OF THE PEOPLES PULPIT:—

Through a friend there has come to my hands a copy of your *Peoples Pulpit*, which has interested me exceedingly to the very end, for I see that you invite inquirers to send for additional literature. I hope I may be favored with some—"The Thieves in Paradise," "The Rich Man in Hell" and "Lazarus in Abraham's Bosom." I also wish to know more fully about the book entitled "*The Plan of the Ages*." Anticipating the kindness, I am,

Yours very truly,

MANUEL R. LANUZA.

(Translated from the Spanish.)

Philippine Islands.

BLESSING GOD AND CURSING MEN

[This article was a reprint of that published in issue of April 1, 1899, which please see.]

"THE PRESENCE OF THE SON OF MAN"

MATTHEW 24:32-44.—NOVEMBER 13.

"Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."—Matthew 26:41.

For various reasons many Bible students understand that our Lord referred to the Jewish nation under the symbolism of a fig-tree. He had been telling his disciples what he expected in the end of this age, when he would come again to receive his faithful to himself and to give them a place as his bride upon his throne and to establish his kingdom under the whole heavens for the blessing of Israel and all the world through Israel.

In this study he tells us that amongst the prominent signs of the closing of this age and the opening of the new will be the budding of the fig tree—the springing forth of new life and new hope in the Jewish nation. And is not this condition of things manifesting itself today? Behold the Jews awakening and listening to the voice of Moses and the Prophets calling them to Palestine and to fresh hope in God and in the glorious promises

to which they still are heirs as the natural seed of Abraham! "For the gifts and calling of God are things he does not repent of."—Rom. 11:11-39.

"THIS GENERATION SHALL NOT PASS"

The generation which witnesses the signs promised in the verses preceding our lesson and which witnesses this putting forth of the green leaves of hope by Israel will see to the full the accomplishment of the glorious change of dispensation so long foretold. They will witness the passing of the reign of the prince of darkness and the inauguration of the glorious reign of the Prince of Light—Messiah with his glorious bride class; not, however, that mankind will see Messiah with the natural eye, nor see even his glorious bride, except with the eyes of their understanding. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" in this highest sense. Flesh and blood, however, will see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom, and will have full testimony and practical demonstration of the kingdom power in the great transformation that will be wrought and the restitution blessings which will be showered upon Israel and upon all who will come into harmony with God through Israel's New Covenant.—Jer. 31:31.

The present ecclesiastical heavens and the present social earth will, indeed, both pass away in the great time of trouble with which this age will end; but following these, supplanting them, will come the new heavens and the new earth—the new religious institutions of the Lord—the church in glory, and the new social order amongst mankind under the regulations for which we still pray, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth." Then the words of the great Teacher will surely have fulfillment.

THE DAY AND HOUR HAD NOT BEEN FORETOLD

The day and hour of the great change no one knew, not even the angels in heaven. The Master himself declared that he did not know—but the Father alone. This should not, however, be understood to mean that the Son of God would not know about the matter later on, in due time, before he would begin his work of establishing the kingdom. Neither would it prove that the angels of heaven would be in ignorance up to the last moment. Neither would it prove that God's people, living at the time for the establishment of the kingdom, would not know. In fact, the Master declares that all living in proper harmony with him would be kept informed respecting the Father's plans as they became due. He declared that if they would partake of the things of God and follow after them, then they should have meat in due season.

In this very study the Great Teacher illustrates this principle, referring to Noah and Lot. Noah was informed respecting the coming change of dispensation when he was instructed to build the ark one hundred and twenty years before the flood. Lot was instructed respecting the disaster coming upon the city in which he lived long enough in advance to escape from it; likewise the church of Christ is forewarned by this illustration and reminded that when they flee they shall not, like Lot's wife, covetously look back to the things which, under divine condemnation, are to pass away, but shall escape to the mountain—flee to the kingdom of God, which will at that time be in process of establishment.

Doubtless much of the immorality and sensuality which marked the days of Noah and the days of Lot will prevail in the world in the closing days of the present age. Other Scriptures so inform us, even though this study intimates nothing of the kind. This lesson brings to our attention another feature connected with our Lord's second advent—a feature which hitherto has been little noticed by Bible students. It informs us that his second coming will be unobserved, unknown to the world; that he will be present in the world, and have to do with the gathering together of his saints and with the great time of trouble which will follow, yet be entirely invisible to men, recognizably only by outward signs of his presence and known only to the saintly few of humanity.

This feature of the lesson is veiled from the eyes of the average Bible student by a mistranslated word. The Greek for the word coming in verses 37 and 39 is *parousia*, which does not mean coming, but should be rendered presence, as of one who has already come.

"IN THE PRESENCE OF THE SON OF MAN"

This gives us a stupendous thought! The great King of kings will for a time be present amongst men, invisible, unknown, except by a very few of his saints, to whom his presence will be revealed through the knock of prophecy and the opening of the eyes of their understanding to appreciate fulfillments. Everything will continue as ordinarily—the eating, drinking, planting, building and marrying, "as it was in the days of Noah." Had the world known in Noah's day the climax of trouble impending, many of the ordinary affairs of life would

have been discontinued—and likewise here. The lesson is that as the world did not know in Noah's day, so the world will not know "in the days of the Son of Man"—in the presence of the Son of Man.

The field is the world, said our Lord, in explaining one of his parables. And so we should interpret it here. The Lord will gather some of his jewels from the field; all not his jewels will be left. Two will be grinding at the mill preparing food for the household; one will be taken and another left. The Lord's household is the church, and the mills which prepare the food for the church are theological. The intimation is that some theologians will be taken and some will be left, in the selective processes of the presence of the Son of Man—in the making up of his jewels.

St. Luke mentions another feature of this discourse. There shall be two in one bed; the one shall be taken and the other left. A bed is a place for rest. All churches profess to be resting places, where the weary and heavily laden rest through faith in God and in his promises. The teaching, then, would be that not all who are resting in the churches of Christendom, in the creeds, will be amongst the elect, the gathered jewels. Some will be taken away from these beds. Others will be left in them. A vivid description of these creed-beds and their unsatisfactory character is given us by the Prophet.—Isaiah 28:20.

WATCH THAT YE MAY KNOW

Following these illustrations of his presence and his work in the harvest time of this Gospel age the Master exhorts all of his followers to watch, to be ready, to be on the alert, to be on the lookout, that they may be ready for his presence, that they may, in due time, discern his presence, and that they may be gathered or separated from the world and theological relationship, and from earthly church relationship, to the Master himself. Some very earnest Bible students believe that we are in this harvest period now; that the Son of Man, the glorious Messiah, invisible to men, is even now present doing a searching and separating work in his church, gathering his saints unto himself preparatory to their change from earthly to heavenly condition and preparatory to the inauguration of the great time of trouble, by which present institutions will be blotted out to make way for the kingdom of righteousness, for which we have so long prayed. Many Bible students believe that the present unrest and sifting and shaking amongst Christians and the creeds of all denominations and the colleges and seminaries are but incidental to this work which the Son of Man, present amongst us, is accomplishing for the purpose of fully separating to himself his very elect. Whether this proposition be agreed to or not, the fact still remains that thus matters will be whenever the time shall come, whenever the end of this age and the inauguration of the new shall take place.

SATAN'S HOUSE TO BE BROKEN UP

All of the foregoing suggestions are confirmed by the symbolism of the 43d verse. Here the Master likens the institutions of the present time to a house or household. Elsewhere he informs us that Satan is the prince of this world, the over-lord who tyrannizes the world, operating through the weaknesses and passions and depraved appetites and impaired reasoning faculties of humanity. Had the time of the Lord's second advent been clearly made known that knowledge would have so altered matters and affairs that the world would not have been taken by surprise in connection with the gathering of the Lord's jewels and the establishment of his kingdom, and thus there would not be such a breaking-up in earth's affairs as is now impending; the kingdom would be established, but not in the way in which God designed.

In this verse our Lord likens his second presence, unknown to the world, to the presence of a thief in a house, unknown to its master. The Lord's saints in the world are his jewels. These he will take away and the loss to the world will be great. As the saintly ones will be gathered from the field, from the mill and from the bed into closer heart-union with the Lord, those left in the world, the mill and the bed, will be greatly disadvantaged—not because the jewel class are wealthy or have worldly greatness, for of these chosen saints it is distinctly stated that there are amongst them "not many great, not many rich, not many wise, not many noble." But these saintly ones are, nevertheless, the "salt" of the earth and the salt of the churches, and the salt of the theological seminaries. After the taking away of the salt class, putrefaction and disintegration will speedily follow.

In view of all this, all who profess to be the Lord's people should earnestly watch, as well as pray; they should watch their words and thoughts and doings and see to it that they worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, and that they do not idolize either dead or living men or creeds. Thus walking circumspectly in the footsteps of Jesus the saintly ones will be kept in the hour of temptation, which shall come upon the whole world to prove them.—Rev. 3:10.

THE LIBERTY WHEREWITH CHRIST MAKES FREE

Liberty is a grand word, yet it does not always spell true blessing and happiness. In the Second Psalm we read of some who say, "Let us break their bands asunder"—let us be free. In Genesis we read of how Satan broke loose from the restraining hand of righteousness and made shipwreck of his eternal interests. We learn also of how he seduced Mother Eve and she persuaded Adam to break loose from the Divine restraints to eat of the forbidden fruit. The entire history of the Jewish nation is a narrative of rebellions against Divine regulations—temporary feelings of release and liberty and subsequent experiences of sorrow and repentance. Judas cut loose from bondage to his Master and the Divine providences represented in him. The thirty pieces of silver, the wage of his treachery, brought joy to his craven heart for but a little time. At last it ate as doth a canker and he wished it back and himself rid of the liberty into which he sold himself. St. Peter was unwillingly entrapped into denying his Master and asserting his liberty with oaths. But his loyal heart could find no rest in such liberty.

Should it surprise us that the Adversary still holds up the bait of liberty and leads the world into all kinds of excesses in the name of liberty? Should it surprise us that amongst God's people, too, he uses the same tactics—telling them that they are enslaved when they are obedient to the voice of God's Word

and to the leadings of his providence? Is it surprising that he urges them to break the bands of the consecration and reassert their freedom? It is not strange? Nor is it peculiar that some, in leaving the Truth, are beginning a warfare against it—opposing the very harvest work which once they endorsed and co-operated with, betraying it, seeking to injure it, etc. When such boast of their new-found liberty we ask them, What liberty have you? The only answer can be that they feel relieved in being rid of their bonds of consecration to the Lord. Alas! they glory in their shame. What need we wonder if anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife, bitterness, back-biting, assassination, slander and murderous hatred take the place in their hearts and conduct, once filled by the spirit of brotherly kindness, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering?

Let all the children of the light, begotten of the holy Spirit, rejoice in the only liberty that is really a blessing, the liberty wherewith Christ makes free those who become his bond-servants. These are set free from the bondage of sin—envy, malice, strife, hatred and the murderous spirit. These are bound with cords of love to their Master and to the letter and spirit of his teachings—bound to do good unto all men as they have opportunity, especially to the household of faith—bound to the altar of sacrifice with cords of devotion, strengthening as the days go by, even unto death; for such is the crown of life prepared.

THE DARK GETHSEMANE HOUR

MATTHEW 26:36-46.—NOVEMBER 20.

"The Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."—V. 45.

After the Master and his disciples, as Jews, had celebrated the Passover Supper and after he had subsequently instituted the Memorial of his death, with the bread and the cup, and after Judas had gone out to betray him, Jesus and the remaining eleven left the upper room in Jerusalem, crossed the city to the gate, and thence crossed the Valley Kedron and ascended the sloping side of Mt. Olivet toward the Garden of Gethsemane. The word Gethsemane signifies oil-press. Tradition has it that this Garden belonged to the family of which the Apostles John and James were members, and that for this reason the Lord and his disciples were privileged to feel themselves at home there. St. Mark, the writer of one of the Gospels, but not one of the Apostles, is credited with having been a member of the same family. One of the accounts of the arrest of the Master tells that amongst those who followed after him was a young man wrapped with a sheet, and who fled naked when some members of the band attempted to lay hold of him. That young man, tradition says, years afterwards was known as St. Mark.

This was the most memorable night of the Master's experience. He knew perfectly the meaning of every feature of the Passover. He knew that he was the Lamb of God, antitypically, whose death was to be accomplished on the following day by crucifixion. Yet his thoughts were for his dear disciples. He must give them final words of encouragement and instruction. And so he did. Three chapters of St. John's Gospel record the incidents of the intervening time between the leaving of the upper room and the arriving at Gethsemane, the place of the oil-press. "And Judas also, who betrayed him, knew the place, for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples." (John 18:2) In St. John 14 the Master told his disciples about the place he would go to prepare for them, but that he would send the Spirit of Truth to be their comforter, and it would show them things to come. In the fifteenth chapter he gave them the parable of the Vine and the branches, and assured them that no longer should they be servants, but friends, "For all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." In the sixteenth chapter he explained to them that persecutions must be expected, if they would share his sufferings and be prepared to share his glory.

A little while and they would not see him; then again a little while and they would see him. The entire period of his absence from the divine standpoint, as compared to eternity, would be but a little while. Then, by virtue of the resurrection "change," they would see him, because made like him. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." "These things I have given unto you that in me ye might have peace." In the seventeenth chapter is recorded his wonderful prayer to the Father on behalf of his followers—not for the Apostles only, but for all those also who would believe on him through their word.

IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

Thus discoursing, they reached the Garden, or olive-yard, where the press for extracting the oil from the olives was located. Somewhere near the entrance eight of the disciples were bidden to remain watching while Jesus, with the specially beloved Peter, James and John, went a little farther. And then, realizing the impossibility of even his dearest friends appreciat-

ing his sorrowful condition, he went still farther alone to speak to the Father. The disciples, perplexed, astounded, by the things that they had heard from his lips, did not comprehend the true situation. They evidently thought that there must still be something parabolic in his utterances. They would indeed watch with him, but they were weary and sank into slumber. The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak.

If some have queried why the Master preferred to be alone in prayer so frequently, the answer is, "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me." (Isa. 63:3) His disciples and followers loved him dearly. Still he was alone, because he alone had been begotten of the holy Spirit. His followers could not feel so blessed nor be Spirit-begotten until after his sacrifice had been finished nor until he would appear in the presence of God for them to apply his merit imputedly to them; to permit them to join with him sacrificially in the sufferings of this present time, that they might share with him also in the glories to follow.

St. Peter, referring to the foregoing experience of our Lord, declares that he offered up strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in respect to that which he feared. Why did he fear? Do not all humanity face death, and some of them with great courage and some with bravado? Ah, there is a vast difference between the Master's standpoint and ours as respects death. We were born dying. We never knew perfect life. We have always known that there is no escape from death. It was different with him. His experiences on the spirit plane before coming into the world were all in association with life, perfection of life. "In him was life" uncontaminated, because he was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners; his life came not from Adam.

He knew that in his perfection he had a right to life, if he would live in perfect accordance with the divine requirements. But he knew also that by special covenant with God, "a covenant by sacrifice," he had agreed to the surrender of all his earthly rights and to allow his life to be taken from him. The Father had promised him a great reward of glory, honor and immortality through resurrection from the dead, but this was dependent upon his absolute obedience in every particular—in word, in thought, in deed. The question was, Had he been absolutely loyal to God in every particular? If not, death would mean to him an eternal extinction of being; not only the loss of heavenly glory promised as a reward, but the loss of everything. Can we wonder that he did not understand? The hour seemed so dark, and he said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful." He knew that he was to die. He knew that death was necessary. But here, now, looming up before him on the morrow was a shameful execution as a blasphemer, as a criminal, as a violator of divine law. Could it be possible that in anything, even slightly, he had taken to himself the honor due to the Father? Could it be possible that in any degree he had held back, even in his mind, from full obedience to the Father's will? Did this crucifixion as a criminal possibly mean the loss of divine favor? Was it necessary that he should die thus? Might not this cup of ignominy pass? So he prayed in a great agony. And although the older Greek manuscripts do not contain the statement that he sweat great drops of blood, medical science tells us