

# Triumph Through Tribulation

## A Frank Appraisal Of Twenty Arguments That The Church Will Not Pass Through The Tribulation

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## Foreword

In a day when a stronger welding together of all of God's own is much to be desired, the writer would not care to divide the brethren by dealing with a subject about which equally good men differ. However, one who is familiar with the great variety of prophetic views could hardly hope to add to the division that already exists. If the writer succeeds in challenging his readers to an earnest and prayerful re-examination of the fully authoritative Word of God he believes his purpose will have been achieved. Such is the best course open to those who would discover the unifying mind of the Lord.

We can do no better than to sincerely seek to heed the apostolic injunction in 1 Cor. 1:10 "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

After sitting through a portion of the New York Congress on Prophecy in 1942, the writer was conscious of the effort that had been made to achieve a unity of testimony. In spite of this, however, there emerged a considerable diversity of opinion. For example, some speakers said the Church is not to look for signs. On the other hand, one affirmed that the wars and social upheavals of the present are significant signs.

Some problems upon which some of us desired light were either largely sidestepped or dismissed with some glib generalization. For example, one speaker said that some of his friends believe that the Church will pass through the Great Tribulation but he believed the Tribulation to be not a "blessed hope" but a "black horror." Where is the person who believes that the Tribulation is a "blessed hope"?

It hardly compliments one's friends to attribute to them a position that neither they nor any sane person holds. Setting up a dummy for the fun of knocking it down is a common dialectic device but it deserves no place in the armory of the sincere Christian. So far from the Tribulation being a "blessed hope," I am convinced the hope of the coming Deliverer will shine with more luster than it does now in the hearts of millions of believers who know little of suffering.

It is fair to ask: "Why do so many preach the Church will not go into the Great Tribulation?" No doubt they are quite sincere in their belief. However, I am convinced there are a number of factors, apart from exegetical, that have made a subtle contribution to their faith and testimony. Allow me to mention four.

First of all, I am convinced that in many a case a minister has found little time in the midst of a busy ministry for the detailed study of prophetic truth. Consequently he has taught what is to be found in the prophetic literature at hand.

A second reason why many have taught the Church will not pass through the Tribulation is an excessive desire to meet a popular demand for the most comforting type of teaching. For example Dr. H. C. Thiessen closes his book, *Will the Church Pass Through the Tribulation?* with the words: "We may then comfort one another with the thought that the Church will not pass through the Tribulation." Dr. J. H. Cohn characterizes his brochure on the same theme as a "brief message of comfort and reassurance." On this point A. Reese in *The Approaching Advent of Christ* well says: "The very fact of the scheme's being so comforting and pleasing to the flesh is a consideration that reveals its unscriptural character; for it is not the way of the scripture to make the path of the saints easy." I am convinced that there is a crying need for a re-dedication to the truth, whether we like it or not, whether we stand with the majority of our friends or not.

Third--and I hesitate to say this although I believe it is true--I am convinced there are some who are being led to question what they have taught about the Tribulation for years but who hesitate to make any admission they have been wrong, in the false belief it would weaken the faith of people in them as authoritative teachers and thus restrict their ministry. It is not often that one finds so refreshing a confession as is to be found in the late

James M. Gray's *Christian Workers' Commentary*, where he deals with the question of the identity of the man on the white horse of Rev. 6:2. He says: "The rider on the white horse was identified with Christ in *Synthetic Bible Studies*, but the author now considers it more consistent to identify him with 'the man of sin.'"

Finally, there can be no question that some men are characterized by an inordinate lust for novelty of interpretation whether it has any solid Biblical basis or not. For example, at the above-mentioned prophetic congress some, perhaps most, of the speakers referred to the coming of Christ for His Church as the second coming of Christ. One speaker, however, apparently echoing C. F. Hogg, affirmed that the coming of Christ for the Church is not the second coming of Christ at all, because He does not quite come to the earth. He said the second coming of Christ is His coming in glory and power to establish His Kingdom. Dr. D. G. Barnhouse, in an article in *Revelation*, Nov. 1942, says that neither of these positions is correct. The correct position, he affirms, is that the second coming of Christ is not an event at all but rather "a series of events" distributed through "an indeterminate period of years."

Surely one can sympathize with the lament of C.H.M. (Charles H. McIntosh) in his *Papers on the Lord's Coming*, p. 33: "It is wonderful how speedily the human mind wanders away into the wildest and grossest confusion and error."

The present writer comes to this study with the deepest sense of unworthiness, making no profession of being either a scholar or theologian. His preparation for the task may be epitomized by saying that after receiving degrees from Columbia University and Princeton Theological Seminary he spent about fourteen years in two pastorates in New York State and one year as director of the Manila Evangelistic Institute in the Philippines.

It has not been easy for him to come to his present position inasmuch as he has for years accepted without question the popular view that the Church will escape the Tribulation by being raptured to heaven. It was during preparation for a series of addresses on the Apocalypse that the light began to dawn. While reading over 6300 pages of comments on the Book of Revelation he was disturbed by finding such a diversity of Opinion amongst trusted Premillennialists. While differences of view concerning many of the minor details is of such a book are hardly to be wondered at, the dogmatism with which many of these opinions were expressed considerably distressed the writer and drove him more than ever to the Word itself. For example, one writer makes what appears an artificial and arbitrary distinction and then adds: "We must not confound things which God in His infinite wisdom has made to differ!" When men claim for their opinions "the infinite wisdom of God," it is not surprising that many of their readers, not wishing to oppose the "infinite wisdom of God," swallow everything propounded, hook, line, and sinker.

This writer, however, finally lost faith in the *Ipse Dixit* of many a Bible teacher and re-examined the prophetic Word, with the result that many of his long cherished views had to be jettisoned. He has come to believe that the view that the Church will not pass into or through the Great Tribulation is based largely upon arbitrary interpretations of obscure passages. And it has been of some encouragement to know that the writer finds himself in essential agreement with many of the greatest premillennial teachers of all time.

We are indebted to Bishop Handley Moule for reminding us that Paul wanted his converts, under the Spirit's guidance, to think for themselves. "Brethren, be not children in understanding," wrote Paul to the Corinthians. Again, he tells the Ephesians that the five-fold gift of Christ to His Church (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers) has a five-fold purpose. It is for the perfecting of the saints (literally "the repairing of the saints!"), for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ, that all may come in unity of faith and knowledge to a perfect man, and that we no longer as children be tossed to and fro and *carried about with every wind of doctrine*, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up.

While the author may appear rather straight-forward and severe in some of the things he will say, he does not want to be known as a theological iconoclast but one who sincerely desires to help others into the light he now enjoys.

The plan is very simple. First, an examination of what the New Testament has to say in the passages in which are found the words which are the English equivalents of the Greek word that is rendered tribulation. Second, a brief view of the most familiar Old Testament passages that are referred to the Great Tribulation. And finally, an attempted evaluation of the commonest arguments in favor of the proposition that the Church will not pass through the period of trial. The arguments for the positive side will be brought out in the examination of the arguments for the negative position.

## I. The Term “Tribulation” In The New Testament

The word tribulation translates a Greek word, *thlibo* (verb) or *thlipsis* (noun). This Greek word occurs fifty-five times in the New Testament. Thayer translates the verb “to press” (as grapes), “to press hard upon,” from which we have the thought of *oppression, distress, affliction, and tribulation*.

Eight different words are used in the Authorized Version to translate this Greek word in its fifty-five occurrences. They are: *tribulation, anguish, burdened, narrow, persecution, throng, trouble, and affliction*. We shall do well to examine each passage to discover whether the word has reference to the present pressure to which the Church is subjected or whether the reference is to the unexampled period of suffering yet to take place which is called the Great Tribulation, or whether the suffering is the divine retribution to be visited upon an ungodly world after Christ returns in glory.

Of the fifty-five instances we find that in twenty-two the word is rendered *tribulation*. Let us first of all look at these.

*Matt. 13:21 “Yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.”*

This reference in the parable of the soils is to the trouble that comes to one who receives God’s Word. The affliction has its source in the enemies of God and of His Word. There is no reference to a future Great Tribulation

*Matt. 21.21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.’’*

Clearly this points to the Great Tribulation, a period of unprecedented suffering in the future. From the immediate context we learn that it will take place when the abomination spoken of by Daniel stands in the holy place, or, to be more accurate, the appearing of this abomination will be the signal that the Great Tribulation is soon to break upon the scene. Those living in Palestine at that time, who have any familiarity with this prophecy, will see in the abomination a warning to flee to the mountains before the fury--very likely of a military character-- is let loose.

This period of suffering will be shortened for the purpose of manifesting to the elect what may be called *survival grace*. There is nothing here to indicate who the elect are, although there is every likelihood the term refers to the Church, inasmuch as of the fifteen other occurrences of the word *elect* in the New Testament, one refers to Christ, another to certain angels, and there is no sound reason for supposing the other thirteen do not refer to the Church, or individual members of the Church.

*Matt. 24:29 (Mark 13:24) "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:"*

This obviously refers to the same Great Tribulation and fixes the time of it as immediately before the coming of Christ in power and glory, or, more accurately, immediately before the cosmic signs that herald the early arrival of Christ. From this context we learn that at least one purpose of His coming is to gather His elect. The elect here are the same as the ones for whom the Tribulation will be shortened. The most natural reference is to the Church. Just as in the description of the gathering of the elect in 1 Thes. 4, there is the sounding of a trumpet.

In this passage in Matthew our Lord goes on to show what should be the two-fold attitude of His followers (the "ye" of v. 42). It should be one of watchfulness (v. 42) and readiness (v. 44). The watchfulness undoubtedly refers to "these things" of v. 33, that is, the signs of Christ's coming. The readiness speaks of the heart attitude and faithfulness that characterize those who "love His appearing." Watchfulness helps to produce the readiness. There is thus both an intellectual and a moral preparation for His coming.

*John 16:33 "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."*

This refers to the suffering which is the lot of all who are identified with Him who was the Man of Sorrows. There is nothing here to indicate that the suffering Church will not go on into the Great Tribulation. Christ's followers are to be of good cheer, not because He will come and remove them from a sphere of suffering but because He will enable them to be overcomers in the midst of it, inasmuch as He has already overcome the evil world system. This promise is particularly illuminating as we look at it in the light of the much-debated Rev. 3: 10, following which is the *promise to the overcomer* which promise obviously can have no meaning if one is previously removed from the sphere of trial.

The late Dan Crawford of Africa has distinguished between the poets and the Bible. The poet says: "Cheer up! The best is yet to be!" The Bible says: "Cheer up! The worst is yet to come!" There is cheer for believers because our Lord has already overcome the world which is the source of our sorrows.

*Acts 14:22 "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."*

"Much tribulation" here should be "many tribulations." These words epitomize the message of Paul in the very city of Lystra where shortly before he had been stoned and left for dead. The reference is clearly to the present afflictions of believers. It is interesting to observe, however, that the terminus is "the kingdom of God." It is like going through a dark tunnel only to emerge at last in the glorious light of the Kingdom. The apostle makes it clear in 2 Thes. 1:5 that the faithful endurance of present sufferings in some sense qualifies us for the Kingdom.

*Rom. 2:9 "Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;"*

If we read thus in the light of its context, particularly verses 5--8, 16 it will be clear that Paul is referring to the divine judgment that will fall upon the ungodly in the "day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." This day cannot be held to refer to the Great Tribulation but, as Canon Moule has well said, to "the definite time of the Lord's appearing" to raise the dead and judge the world. This is confirmed in 2 Thes. 1:6--9 where Paul affirms that Christ's coming in flaming fire introduces the day of wrath against all who have been against God and Christ.

In the following verses the reference is so clearly to the sufferings of the present that I shall be content to merely

enumerate the verses: Rom. 5:3; 8:35; 12:12; 2 Cor. 1:4; 7:4; Eph. 3:13; 1 Thes. 3:4; 2 Thes. 1:4, 6; Rev. 1:9; 2:9.

Rev. 2:10 “*Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*”

This promise of suffering for ten days has been thought to refer to the ten major persecutions of the Church in early times. There is no clear reference to the Great Tribulation. Even if some should think there is, the principle of a Church removed from a sphere of suffering is not illustrated here but the very opposite, and a reward is promised to the overcomers.

Rev. 2:22 “*Behold, I will cast her into a bed and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.*”

There is no clear reference here to the Great Tribulation. If any of the pre-Tribulation Rapture School thinks there is, it will give them pause to read the next verse with its “all the churches shall know.” It would seem that this passage is simple a general threat of coming judgment upon all apostates who are guilty of spiritual fornication.

Rev. 7:14 “*These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*”

Here is the only New Testament passage in which the definite article is used, in the original, before *Great Tribulation*, and therefore there is no doubt of the meaning here. It is a picture of a great company of people who have come out of the Great Tribulation. They have been drawn from all nations and tribes and stand before the heavenly throne cleansed by the blood of Christ. God Himself wipes away the tears of tribulation. No clearer picture in the Bible can be found of the Church of Christ. This identification would seem inevitable except to those who feel constrained by a pre-Tribulation rapture theory to interpret the twenty-four elders of Revelation as symbolical of the Church. And so one naturally concludes that if the Church here is seen to come out of Great Tribulation, it must have gone into it, or through it.

Now that we have examined the passages in which *thlibo*, *thlipsis* is translated *tribulation*, we shall briefly notice those in which it is translated by the seven other words already referred to. On twenty-one occasions it is rendered affliction or one of its derivatives. In but one of these is the reference clearly to the future Great Tribulation, namely in Mark 13:19, and this corresponds to Matt. 24:21 upon which we have already commented.

Seven times the word is rendered *trouble* or one of its derivatives. In no instance is there any reference to the Great Tribulation. *Thlipsis* is rendered but once in each of the following *anguish*, *burdened*, *narrow*, *persecution*, and *throng*. In each instance there is no clear connection with the Great Tribulation. The interpretation is so obvious that I omit the references, which, if one cares to examine them, can readily be found in an analytical concordance.

## Summary

Of the fifty-five occurrences of the word *thlibo*, *thlipsis*, there are but three passages that clearly refer to the Great Tribulation, namely Matt. 24:21 (Mark 13:19), Matt. 24:29 (Mark 13:24), and Rev. 7:14. Most of the other passages relate to the sufferings of the Church in this present age.

This Great Tribulation is described as a time of unprecedented suffering to come upon the world. It will begin soon after the abomination, predicted by Daniel, stands in the holy place of the restored Jewish temple. It will be followed by the glorious appearing of Christ who comes for the purpose of gathering out of the world His elect. This period will be shortened as a manifestation of His grace. To prepare the elect for Christ's coming, certain signs of His near advent will be given. The elect are to watch for the signs and be ready for the coming. After the Great Tribulation is past, a great multitude of blood-washed from all the nations and tribes appears before the throne of God who wipes away the tears occasioned by their tribulation.

In each of these three passages that speak clearly of the Great Tribulation, there are indications that point to the Church passing through the period. In Matt. 24:21 we find the period shortened for the elect, a term that in the New Testament always refers to the Church or individual Christians, except in two instances where the reference is to Christ and to certain angels. In Matt. 21:29 we learn that the Great Tribulation is just before Christ returns for the purpose of gathering His elect. In Rev. 7:14 we see a great blood-washed throng before the throne, the description of which fits the Church perfectly.

Therefore it would seem that the conclusion is inevitable that, so far as these three clear passages are concerned, we are fully justified in believing the Church will pass through the Great Tribulation. At least, there is nothing in these passages that teaches the contrary and much that argues for it.

## **II. The Great Tribulation In The Old Testament**

WITHOUT attempting an exhaustive survey of Old Testament passages that speak of the Great Tribulation, I would mention a few that are said to refer to it.

*Deut. 4:30--31 "When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto His voice; (For the Lord thy God is a merciful God); He will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which He sware unto them."*

It is said that this is the first clear delineation of the coming Great Tribulation to be found in the Old Testament. The words, "in the latter days," serve to identify it.

*Jer. 30:7 "Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it."*

Many have identified this passage with the Great Tribulation and with good reason, for the unparalleled degree of suffering ties in with our Lord's description of the Tribulation as a time when suffering will be at its zenith. It is instructive to note in v. 24 that "in the latter days" the suffering of the Jews will provoke deep thought.

It would seem that at the end of the age there will be an unequalled attempt to exterminate the Jews but, as Jeremiah says, it will prove abortive, for Israel will be saved out of this time of trouble. God will preserve a remnant that will come through the fire unscathed, even as the three Hebrews went through the fiery trial of Nebuchadnezzar. We find confirmation of this in Rev. 7:1--8 where we are told that destructive forces are to be held in check until God has sealed 144,000 (very likely a symbolical number) from the twelve tribes of Israel. Dr. Harry Ironside in his *Not Wrath But Rapture* says in this connection that this period is the time of Jacob's trouble, not the time of the Church's trouble. He says the Church is having its time of trouble now. But, let us ask, what is there to hinder both the Church and Israel being in trouble at the same time? If Jacob is not having trouble now, as we think of the millions of Jews in Europe that are being slowly or suddenly exterminated, who knows what trouble is?

Dan. 12:1 *“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”*

The unprecedented character of the trial here set forth clearly identifies this with the Great Tribulation. As in Jer. 30:7 it is said that Israel will be saved or delivered out of it.

Dr. Ironside mentions Isa. 13:6-13 as a passage that refers to the Great Tribulation. The events in that passage are said to take place at the Day of the Lord, which I believe can be proved to be not the Tribulation at all but rather the time of the manifestation of divine wrath at the coming of Christ. This passage speaks of certain cosmic signs in sun, moon, and stars, and if one reads this in the light of Matt. 24:29 which says that these take place “immediately after the tribulation,” one will not be likely to confound Isa. 13:6-13 with the Great Tribulation. Scofield confirms this by referring to Rev. 19:11--21 as a parallel passage.

### **III. Arguments Of The Pre-Tribulation Rapturists**

#### **1. Not a syllable of Scripture affirms the Church will enter or pass through the Tribulation.**

SUCH is the claim of Dr. C. I. Scofield in a special pamphlet on the subject. He says that in the “new promise” of John 14:1--3 there is no hint of such a thing. Not a sign is given, he says, in contrast to the signs given to Israel in the Olivet Discourse. He affirms that in that discourse all the signs except the cosmic ones precede the Tribulation and “are markedly Jewish in character.”

While the argument from the silences of Scripture may sometimes be permissible, it needs to be used with great caution. Because our Lord had no desire to mention signs in John 14 does not imply that He is describing an entirely different event from that of Matthew 24. It is passing strange that anyone would infer that the few words concerning our Lord’s coming in John 14 were intended to constitute a detailed and complete description of the Second Coming in all its prophetic relations!

Some of the signs in Matthew 24 are obviously Jewish in character. Still it is far from true to affirm that all of them are “markedly Jewish in character.” One of the signs is that of wars and rumors of wars. Anyone who would say that such a sign is distinctively Jewish is not only unfamiliar with the stormy history of the Gentile nations but lays himself open to the charge of anti-Semitic bias. Of course no one who knew Dr. Scofield would say for a moment that such a picture of ignorance and racial bias characterized him, but such could be a logical implication of his broad statement concerning the signs of Matthew 24.

As I shall hope to point out later, there is no justification for limiting the message of Matthew to the Jews any more than we are justified in saying that the Great Commission and promise of Christ’s presence of Matthew 28:18--20 are not for the Church. It is strange that, if Jesus was addressing the disciples in the upper room as representatives of His Church that would soon be baptized into existence, a few hours later on the other side of the Kidron He would be addressing them exclusively as representatives of the Jewish nation! I do not say that He could not have done so but the burden of proof is with those who would make such a distinction.

The only passage that clearly sets forth the time-relation of the Tribulation to the coming of Christ is in Matt. 24:29 where we are told the coming of Christ will be “immediately after the Tribulation.” If there is another coming of Christ before the Tribulation, why is there not somewhere in the Scriptures an equally unambiguous statement to that effect? Why is it necessary to defend the position by elaborate reasonings based upon obscure passages?

## **2. The character of God as a God of grace demands that the Church not go through the Tribulation**

This is another of the arguments of Dr. Scofield and others. “Is the Great Tribulation a kind of purgatory?” he asks. Allowing the Church to pass through the Tribulation no more reflects on the character of God as a God of grace than the suffering of believers all through the present age is a reflection on God. The present Christian course is described in the Scriptures as a “straight and narrow way,” and that word narrow means literally tribulatory. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the Church will suffer any more during the Tribulation than it has suffered on many occasions since the day of Pentecost.

W. R. Newell in his commentary on the Apocalypse, p. 382, argues that since the great majority of the Church already has escaped the Tribulation period by dying and going to heaven, why suppose that a relatively small segment of the Church at the end will be subjected to a trial the others escaped? Would this not be a reflection on the character of God?

To this I would reply that the Church is not the object of divine wrath during the Tribulation nor any other time, but only the object of Satanic wrath, and we do not know how severe that will be. Certainly we have no assurance it will be worse than much of the suffering already experienced. Furthermore, who are we to judge God by saying He should see to it that no Christian suffers more than another? We know that in the present some Christians have far more of suffering than do others and this is all within the inscrutable and all-wise and loving purpose of God. Our confidence in Him as a God of justice and mercy is not thereby impaired if we are men of genuine faith in God.

If Newell would condemn God unless every Christian’s suffering is equated to that of every other’s, may we not argue: why should present-day Christians escape martyrdom since thousands have had to face it in bygone ages?

Alexander Reese in *The Approaching Advent of Christ*, makes some weighty remarks in this connection. He says that men argue: “‘The Church is a heavenly people in union with Christ; how horrible and unfitting, therefore, that she should be exposed to the dreadful hour of trial under the Devil.’”

“Yes, ‘how horrible and unfitting’ that the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the Body, should have been spat upon, nailed to the gibbet as a malefactor, and have suffered at the hands of the Devil! . . . Moreover, all the objections that Darbyists urge as necessitating the exemption of the Church from the Great Tribulation apply with equal force to securing the exemption of the saints of Rev. 7:9--17 from the same trial. They are a heavenly people, an election of Jews and Gentiles out of all tribes and nations, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and saved by grace; they, too, are precious to the Savior. If it is too horrible to think of the Church in the last crisis, then why is it not too horrible to conceive of the multitude of Rev. 7:9--17 in the same trial? Why cannot theorists spare some pity for the martyrs of the End-time, and free them also from affliction?”

“Again, did not the Lord have a tender regard for His Church? If there was some compelling reason why His people should be exempt from the last fiery trial, why did not He convey some indication of it? Instead, in a long discourse to the Apostles on the consummation of this evil Age He used language that not only presupposed that His beloved saints would be in that trial, but He actually gave them instructions concerning their conduct in it. He even promised the Church His spiritual presence until the End of the Age of which the Great Tribulation is a consummation (Matt. 28:20). Yet it is this very teaching that is cast off as ‘Jewish’ and ‘unsuitable’ for the Church. Darbyists, I am very sure, would not knowingly say one word derogatory to Christ, yet their devotion to a theory often leads them to say unwittingly things that are terribly irreverent.”

And so we must admit that God is still a God of grace when He permits His Church to enter the Tribulation. God has no favorites amongst His saints but is gracious to them all.

### **3. The nature of the Great Tribulation is such as to rule out the possibility of the Church being on the earth at that time**

The Great Tribulation is defined as a time of unprecedented suffering which is the result of an outpouring of divine wrath, and this wrath has Israel in particular as its object.

While this definition contains some truth, we do well to look into the question of the source of the wrath, for it is at just this point that some misapprehensions have arisen. Scofield and others rightly point to the apocalyptic vials as divine judgments. Some forget that some of the suffering of that period stems from wicked men. Many of the trials of God's people in that period arise from the blasphemous claims and demand of the Beast that his image be worshiped and his mark be inscribed.

In trying to prove that the Church will not be on earth during the Tribulation, Dr. Pettingill draws a false antithesis. He says the source now of the Church's sufferings is the enemies of God. But the source of suffering in the Tribulation is God and the suffering falls upon the enemies of God. Because the enemies of God suffer during the Tribulation, therefore the Church will not be on earth. Which of course is very obviously a non sequitur. He seems to overlook the fact that God has a people on earth during the Tribulation, Satanic wrath is manifested against them.

While I would not draw upon Old Testament analogies for proof, we at least find the principle illustrated by Israel during the Egyptian plagues. God's wrath was manifested against His enemies, the Egyptians, but God's earthly people were not removed entirely from the sphere of suffering. Therefore we must conclude that the question as to whether the Church will be in the Tribulation or not is not affected by the question of the source of the wrath to be manifested at that time. Why cannot it be consistent with the divine purpose for the Church to go through the Tribulation without being compelled to feel the full force of it, even as the Israelites went through the plague-period in Egypt? Surely the Church has been permitted to pass through many other periods of suffering and anguish so acute that if those who went through them should have to go through the Tribulation, they would not feel they had missed anything during their first period of trial.

To be sure it may be said that while God is the ultimate source of all the wrath manifested in the Tribulation He may channel some of it through evil men as He has done down through the years. But the moment we make that admission, the force of Pettingill's distinction is destroyed. To-day evil men are permitted of God to both punish themselves and chasten believers.

We would conclude then that all questions of the source, purpose, and channel of the wrath manifested during the Tribulation have nothing to do with the question whether the Church will be on earth at that time. If the Church is here, we may possess an unwavering confidence that God will deal with His own in absolute wisdom and grace, whether they suffer to greater or less degree or are kept unscathed through the period.

My personal conviction is that the Church will be here and will suffer to some extent "for a testimony." Still we are permitted to recall the comforting principle enunciated in 1 Cor. 10:13 (which of course is not limited in its application to God's people now) that God will not permit His own to be tested above that they are able but will with the testing open some way of escape. The way of escape will not necessarily be a rapture out of the world but may very well be a divine preservation through the period of trial. Paul indicates that the purpose of the way to escape is "that ye may be able to bear it." If we were removed from the scene we would not be bearing the testing.

Furthermore, Paul says the way to escape is with the testing. The way to escape might take the form of a partial exemption from suffering, or a leading of believers into a more complete appropriation of their resources in Christ, the faithful and sympathetic High Priest and coming Deliverer. If the principles in 1 Cor. 10:13 are applicable to-day, we may be sure they will be to-morrow.

It is commonly argued that since Scripture plainly teaches that believers will not come into judgment (John 5:24), therefore the Church will not enter Tribulation. The error in that conclusion is found in the assumption (drawn upon only for the sake of this argument) that the only wrath the death of Christ exempts the believer from is the wrath that is manifested during the Tribulation Period. But the Word of God is very clear that there are at least two other periods when divine wrath will be manifested. There is the wrath that will be poured out after the Tribulation when Christ returns in glory, as is abundantly clear in Rev. 6:15--17 and 2 Thes. 1:8. There is also the everlasting wrath that will be experienced in hell.

Alford rightly points out the importance of distinguishing between the trials of the people of God and the judgments upon an unbelieving world. In his comments on Rev. 7:1--8 he makes it clear that the 144,000 are sealed for purposes of exempting them from the judgments that are to fall upon unbelievers. To be sure, in this particular case, the reference is to a certain body of Jews. But the same principle naturally applies to all of God's own. Every believer has a divine seal guaranteeing that he will not come into divine wrath. But this is not to say that he will not witness the manifestation of divine wrath upon an unbelieving world during the Tribulation. We must be quite certain of one thing. Deliverance from divine wrath does not necessarily imply deliverance from the sphere of that wrath. The sealed ones of Rev. 9:4 are not delivered from the sphere of wrath but the locusts are forbidden to touch those with the seal of God in their forehead.

We have yet to consider the third portion of the definition of the Tribulation, namely, the claim that Israel is the particular object of the divine wrath to be manifested then. While it is true that in Jer. 30:7 this period is called "the time of Jacob's trouble," this is not to say that unbelieving Jews in that period will be any more the objects of the wrath of God than unbelieving Gentiles. We cannot agree with one who says that the Great Tribulation is a distinctly national and Jewish calamity, in the light of the universal terms used in the book of Revelation to describe those who must suffer. For example: "them that dwell on the earth," "all, both small and great," "the kings of the earth," and "the hour of temptation which shall come on all the world."

At the same we shall not overlook the possibility that the Jew will be the storm center by reason of the abomination that maketh desolate being in the restored Jewish temple in Jerusalem, which abomination is one significant reason for the outpouring of divine wrath.

Dr. J. H. Cohn in his booklet, *Will the Church Escape the Tribulation?* says "The Word of God refers to this period specifically as the 'time of Jacob's trouble.' Therefore how incongruous and inconsistent it is to inject the Church into it." By the same reasoning we could conclude that there will be no unsaved Gentiles in the world at that time. If the Church is permitted to remain in the world to-day while Jewry is undergoing a terrible tribulation in Europe and elsewhere, why is there any incongruity in the thought of the Church being in the world during the Tribulation when Israel will suffer again?

It is interesting to observe the frequent emphasis men lay upon the first portion of Jer. 30:7, "the time of Jacob's trouble," while the latter part of the verse is frequently soft-pedaled, "but he shall be saved out of it." If a Jewish rabbi took the liberties with this verse that many a prophetic student takes with Rev. 3:10, insisting that it can only mean deliverance by rapture, these Christian prophetic students would disagree with him. And to prove their belief that the Jew will not be raptured away from the Tribulation, they would point to Jer. 30:11 where we learn that Israel, so far from being removed by rapture before the Tribulation, will be saved out of it in the sense of being left in it to be preserved by the Lord from complete destruction. The purpose is expressed in the words, "Yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished." And they would confirm this by referring to the sealed of Israel in Rev. 7, and rightly so. But when it comes to the Church, they somehow believe that God would not let it suffer to any degree, in spite of the fact that He has permitted it all down the centuries.

A further thought concerning the promise of deliverance in Jer. 30:7. Israel's deliverance will be two-fold. She will be saved from this hour in the sense of being preserved from annihilation. She will also be saved at the end

of the period by the appearance of her heavenly Deliverer. As Paul says: “And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”

An excellent illustration of this is seen in the experience of the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace of Nebuchadnezzar. They said to the king: “Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.” However, they went into the furnace and were preserved through it and delivered from it in the sense of not being annihilated. They came out alive, and the king, after it was over, made a significant admission: “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent His angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him.”

The issue was whether they would worship an image set up by this heathen king or remain true to God. Will not this be the issue in the day of Tribulation when the Antichrist demands the worship of an image? Perhaps these three Hebrews of old are intended to be a comfort to the faithful remnant of Israel that remains true through the Tribulation as well as to all of God’s faithful ones in that day!

That there will be people of God in the Tribulation disproves the argument of J. H. Cohn’s, *Will the Church Escape the Tribulation?*, p. 14, that the Church will not go into the Tribulation because “full corruption cannot set in until all the salt has been removed.” There is nothing to indicate that “full corruption” will characterize life on the earth in the Great Tribulation, for there will be the elect on earth at that time. The great multitude of the redeemed of Rev. 7:9 who emerge from the Great Tribulation hardly permit the thought of a fullness of corruption.

It would seem, therefore, that a careful examination of the testimony of Scripture concerning the nature of the Tribulation does not give any warrant for the supposition that the Church must of necessity be excluded from that period.

#### **4. The nature of the Church forbids the thought of its going through the Tribulation**

In Dr. H. A. Ironside’s Introduction to Dr. H. C. Thiessen’s *Will the Church Pass Through the Tribulation?* we read: “Through infinite grace, we who belong to the Body of Christ are not earth-dwellers, but our citizenship is in heaven. Consequently, we have no part in the wrath that is to be poured out upon apostate Christendom and Judaism.”

While there is, of course, the fullest recognition of the blessed truth of the Church’s heavenly citizenship and character as the Body of Christ, we need to use great care lest we draw from this affirmation some unwarranted inferences. What is meant by “We . . . are not earth-dwellers?” I realize that some interpreters of the book of Revelation have given the term “earth-dwellers” a technical meaning which it may or may not bear. Whatever one’s attitude on this question, we must face the sober reality that the Church does actually dwell on the earth now, and that her heavenly citizenship which is a present fact confers upon her no immunity from suffering to-day. Why should it to-morrow? Immunity from divine wrath in the Tribulation confers no immunity from Satanic wrath.

Since the Church is a heavenly people in possession of a heavenly hope, it does not follow that the Church’s hope consists primarily in the desire to escape suffering on earth. I know of no passage in Scripture that encourages believers to hope they may escape the horrors of the Tribulation. On the contrary, with many a passage that speaks of the Christian’s hope we find linked the thought of patient endurance. In Rom. 5:3--4 we read:

“We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope”. In Rom. 12:12 we find: “Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation...” (See also Rom. 15:4, 1 Cor. 13:7, 1 Thes. 1:3.)

Our heavenly citizenship does not absolve us from civic responsibility to-day, we are to “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesars”, nor will it immunize us from the sorrows of to-morrow.

An argument that is hardly worth noticing is that of Sir Robert Anderson. He says that the Church, the mystical Body of Christ, has no corporate existence on the earth. Therefore it cannot as such pass through the Tribulation. I say this is hardly worth noticing because nobody contends that the Church that passes through the Tribulation is the final, complete, corporate entity which has no existence until the last person is added to it that God has called. To claim that one cannot properly speak of the “Church” except in the final corporate sense is an absurd quibbling over terms. When people speak of the Church passing through the Tribulation they naturally mean that part of the Church which is living on earth at that time.

## **5. The doctrine of the mission of the Holy Spirit is said to provide an argument that the Church will not go through the Tribulation**

Although it is generally admitted that the Holy Spirit was in the world before Pentecost and will be in the world after the Rapture of the Church, it is maintained that the Holy Spirit is now in the world in a peculiar sense and is the influence referred to by Paul in 2 Thes. 2:6-7 which restrains the manifestation of the Man of Sin. We are told that the taking away of this hindering influence is at the alleged pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Spirit indwelt Church.

In the first place it is well to issue a warning concerning the peril of building a doctrine on such an obscure passage. It is far from a general consensus of opinion that the influence Paul refers to is that of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Ironside has no uncertainty about it and thinks that every Christian, in reading 2 Thes. 2:6 would say: “There is only one answer possible and that is, of course, the Holy Spirit.” (*Not Wrath But Rapture*--p. 27.) C.H.M. (Charles H. McIntosh). on the other hand is not so dogmatic and says: “Some have considered that the hinderer or hindrance was the Roman Empire; others that it is the Holy Ghost in the Church. To this latter we have inclined for many years; though it may be there is a measure of truth in the former.” (*Papers on the Lord’s Coming*, p. 49, footnote.) He adds that his conviction is that other Scriptures sufficiently establish the pre-Tribulation rapture, even if this one does not.

Some have believed that the hindering influence is that of law and order as embodied in the Roman Empire. It is argued, and with considerable cogency, that Paul was purposely enigmatic and merely reminded the Thessalonians that they knew very well, from previous instruction he had given them, just what the restraining influence was in their day, namely, the Roman Empire. Paul naturally refrained from being specific on paper because he did not wish to endanger the Christian movement by laying it open to charges of sedition through teaching that the system of Roman law and order would someday break down.

Some might ask: “What of the fact that Christ did not return and destroy Antichrist when the Roman Empire disintegrated? Does this not empty this theory of any value?” Not necessarily, for it is true that Roman law lives on as the foundation of modern European jurisprudence which has served as a great bulwark against lawlessness. It is not difficult to believe that in the light of present-day world chaos the day may soon come when war and apostasy will unite in destroying the last vestiges of Roman law and order and thus ripen the world for an antichristian world federation under the Man of Sin.

## **6. “The typical analogies are violated by the notion that the Church will go through the Great Tribulation.” (C. I. Scofield)**

Dr. Scofield cites two of these as of “special significance,” namely, the translation of Enoch before the judgment of the Flood, and the deliverance of Lot before the destruction of Sodom. Both of these are said to be types of the Church that is to be raptured to heaven without dying, before the Tribulation. He then adds that Noah who

was not raptured like Enoch but remained to be preserved through the Flood is a type of Israel in the Tribulation. Why Noah could not be quite as good a type of the Church being preserved through the Tribulation is not explained.

One can easily find other analogies to prove the Church will be preserved through the Tribulation. For example, the Israelites in their marvelous preservation through the plagues of Egypt, and the three Hebrews who were brought unscathed through Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace.

The fact is that it is purely arbitrary to try to prove anything by such analogies. One imagines he can easily prove to his own satisfaction anything one wishes to. When will men cease carrying their little trays through the cafeteria of Scripture, picking and choosing whatever strikes their fancy? The chief value of such comparisons lies in the revelation of the variety of ways in which God works and cares for His own. God refuses to be forced into a groove.

### **7. The doctrine of the Church escaping the Tribulation is proved by the alleged fact of the double coming of Christ**

If frequent reiteration of an unproved theory soon transforms it into an unshakable conviction, then we can understand the huge vogue that the theory of the double coming of Christ now enjoys in premillennial circles. It is commonly taught that Christ's coming is in two phases. First He comes secretly for His Church before the Tribulation, and a number of years later, perhaps seven, He comes publicly for purposes of judgment and the establishment of His Kingdom.

I once held to this theory myself until I painstakingly examined the Scriptural basis for it. Now I am convinced it has no solid Scriptural foundation whatever.

Let us look at a number of instances that illustrate how men unwittingly twist Scripture in order to get proof texts for their theory. A favorite proof text is Acts 1:11

*“Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.”*

Let us see what C.H.M. (Charles H. McIntosh), for example, gets out of this verse in his *Papers on the Lord's Coming*, pp. 16, 17, 23. He claims that the *as* and *so* imply that, as Jesus was last seen only by His own followers, so He will next return to be seen by His own followers alone. “All this, blessed be God, is wrapped up in the two little words *as* and *so*.”

How anyone can possibly see more in these words than a description of the manner of Christ's return is a striking illustration of what false doctrine does to one's mental and spiritual discernment. It would almost seem that the angelic spokesmen had a premonition that the day would come when men would fail to see that *as* and *so* are only words of manner and so they added the words “in like manner” that there might be no misunderstanding! This passage has nothing whatever to say about the spectators at Christ's return. If it does have anything to do with the spectators, then perhaps we should be consistent and say that as Christ left from the presence of His eleven disciples, so we may expect that only those eleven disciples will witness His return.

Apparently such treatment of Scripture as is here exemplified by C.H.M. (Charles H. McIntosh) can hardly be called exegesis but rather eisegesis. While we may have no exegetical proof that the curse of Rev. 22:18 applies to more than the book of Revelation, or to other than those who with deliberation add to Holy Writ, the desire to be led by Him who is the Spirit of Truth should lead one to treat the Word of God with more consideration.

Another example of eisegesis is to be found in the treatment accorded 1 Cor. 15:51--52 by Rev. Albert Lindsey at the New York Prophetic Congress of 1942, as recorded in the book of addresses, *The Sure Word of Prophecy*, p. 269. He claims that the secrecy of Christ's coming for His Church is proved by the words "in the twinkling of an eye." If one reads the passage unhampered by any preconceived notions, one will clearly see that it says nothing whatever about the alleged secrecy of Christ's advent. Paul is not discussing the speed or suddenness or secrecy of Christ's coming. He is simply saying that the transformation of all saints from a corruptible to an incorruptible state at Christ's coming will be practically instantaneous. "We shall all be changed in a moment." This has nothing whatever to do with the question concerning the publicity of His coming--the question whether the unbelieving world will see Christ come for His Church. We know from Rev. 1:7 that "Every eye shall see Him," and we have no Scriptural warrant for saying that that refers to a second phase of His coming. Furthermore, if the coming in 1 Cor. 15 is the first phase of the Second Coming, how account for the phrase, "the last trump"? Should it not be "the next to the last trump"?

Another proof of a secret coming of Christ that Mr. Lindsey adduces is 1 Thes. 5:2 "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." It is strange that he would choose a passage that practically all of those who distinguish two second comings of Christ apply to the second phase, in seeking proof that His coming in the first phase for the Church will be in secret! He adds: "Just as a thief does not warn you as to the hour of his coming, neither will the Lord Jesus."

But let us ask: "Is Paul teaching that Christ's coming will be as a thief, so far as believers are concerned?" No, he is emphasizing the very opposite. He clearly states: "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief!" Could language be more explicit? The reason believers are not in darkness is because they have been given the light of the prophetic Word. Not for nothing has God given them a revelation concerning the harbingers of the coming of His Son.

It is interesting to note that Dr. L. S. Bauman in his *Light from Bible Prophecy*, p. 139, sees a different significance in the coming of Christ as a thief. He sees Christ coming in the role of a kidnapper who will quietly spirit away the Church, unseen by the ungodly world. Otherwise he finds this passage hard to reconcile with the words, "Every eye shall see Him" of Rev. 1:7.

It would seem that Paul's crystal clear words, "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness . . ." "would forever shut out this interpretation that makes the coming of Christ as a thief or kidnapper apply to the Church! Analogies like illustrations should not be forced to go on all fours. Perhaps before long someone will come out with another novelty of interpretation emphasizing the fact that thieves usually come in disguise and will give this some spiritual application.

Another so-called proof of the double coming of Christ is found in the passages that describe our Lord's activities when He returns, activities that concern both the Church and the unbelieving world. It is thought that His gracious receiving of His Church and His treading the winepress of divine wrath in relation to His enemies are so incompatible that one must assume they set forth two different comings. Such a theory, however, is not only wholly unnecessary but it introduces untold confusion into the study of eschatology. The principle of God acting in grace and in judgment at practically the same time is illustrated in the story of Lot. We find that judgment fell the same day that Lot was graciously delivered from the doomed city. Why cannot Christ gather up His own when He appears in the clouds and return with no great delay "with all His saints" in judgment upon a world that has rejected Him? I am not unmindful of the argument that there are said to be a number of events that must take place between Christ's taking up the Church and His return in judgment and that these imply a considerable lapse of time. It is my intention to consider this argument in another place.

There are those who tell us that Jesus in Matthew 24 and Paul in 1 Thes. 4 are "in hopeless contradiction" unless we assume two distinct comings of Christ, one before and the other after the Tribulation. If one, whose mind has not been twisted by this contradiction-theory, makes a simple study of each passage, one will be impressed by

the factors that they have in common--the appearing of Christ in clouds, the sounding of a trumpet, the gathering of the elect. The passage in Matthew differs mainly in giving the relation of this event to other prophetic events, indicating that the Rapture of the elect takes place after the Tribulation. Because there is no reference to the Tribulation or other related events in I Thes. 4 in no sense sets up a contradiction between the two passages.

We are often told that Christ comes the first time for His saints and the second time with His saints. For example, they point to such differing passages as 1 Thes. 4:17 that speaks of His coming for His saints, and 1 Thes. 3:13 that speaks of His coming with them. Why cannot men see that both can occur at the same coming? Is it not probable that when Paul speaks of His coming with His saints, he means that all the saints who have died and gone on to heaven will come back with Him in a disembodied state in order to enter their bodies at the resurrection which takes place before the living are transfigured? If this is so, then we can fit 1 Thes 3:13 into the picture in 1 Thes. 4, for does it not say in 4:14 that those who sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him? We must not press the literalness of the all of 1 Thes. 3:13, as if it presupposes a prior rapture to heaven of all saints, because Paul in that verse makes the coming of Christ with all His saints the terminus ad quem for a practical exhortation to increase their love toward all men. Their love is to increase until the very moment when Christ returns with all His saints. Very obviously, those whose love is increasing are not part of the all saints who return. The all can only refer to the disembodied saints who return with Christ. Therefore there is here no ground whatever for affirming a second coming of Christ as two distinct events.

Another argument advanced by Dr. Scofield is that the epistles reveal a coming day of which the Old Testament and the four Gospels say nothing. That day, he says, is called "the day of Christ" (Phil. 1:10; 2:16) and "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:8). "This new day is the end of the pilgrim pathway. No place for such a day can be found in or after the Great Tribulation."

In this connection it is of interest to observe that Dr. Scofield is not in agreement with all of those who hold to his general position regarding the relation of the Church to the Tribulation. For example, C.H.M. (Charles H. McIntosh), in *Papers on the Lord's Coming*, p. 47, says that "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" of 1 Cor. 1:8 refers to "the Day of the Lord," that is, the second phase of Christ's coming. He would distinguish the two comings by saying that the term "coming" refers to the first phase when He returns to take up His Church, whereas the terms "appearing" and "day" refer to the second phase.

All of which emphasizes the arbitrariness of men who have a bent for distinction without a difference. Why limit God in His statements concerning an event, which admittedly has many aspects, by certain rigid rhetorical formulas? It indicates a very dangerous tendency in wrongly "dividing the Word of truth." In fact, it is of similar stripe to the habit of destructive critics who would divide the Pentateuch into several documents on the basis of the use of different names for God, on the assumption that there must have been a multiple authorship of the Pentateuch since no man would be likely to think of God having more than one name. And yet most of those critics themselves bear three names!

Those who teach a double coming of Christ and that the Church must be raptured to heaven before the Tribulation are forced into weird exegetical vagaries as they seek to explain many passages. For example, J. H. Cohn, in *The Sure Word of Prophecy*, p. 218, attempts to explain the meaning of Rom. 11:26--27. He affirms that when Paul says "All Israel shall be saved" Paul does not mean anything more than the mere preservation from physical annihilation at the hands of the Antichrist. How can one possibly handle the Word of God in this fashion, for the passage contains two expressions that compel one to see a spiritual transformation is involved? ("Turn away ungodliness" and "Take away their sins.")

Another exegetical trap into which men fall is illustrated by a statement by Dr. B. B. Sutcliffe in *The Sure Word of Prophecy*, p. 92, where he says: "The hope of the Church is the coming of the Lord, or the 'blessed hope'; the second coming of Christ is the 'glorious appearing' of our Savior." He makes it clear that the Church is not to look for the second coming or "glorious appearing" but only for the first "coming." The amazing fact is that

both of these terms, the “blessed hope” and the “glorious appearing,” between which it distinguishes, appear in one verse of Scripture, Titus 2:13, where they are very obviously synonymous. And as a further embarrassment, whether they are synonymous or not, they both follow the expression “Looking for!”

Another reason why a double coming of Christ appears so unlikely is that in passage after passage, practical exhortations to Christian faithfulness are connected with passages which are said to refer to the second stage of the Second Coming. One would hardly think that if the Church will be in heaven for at least seven years before the glorious advent, these exhortations would be connected with that advent.

The argument based on the time of the first resurrection throws much light on this theory of the double coming of Christ. Alexander Reese in his study, *The Approaching Advent of Christ*, has devoted sixty pages to elaborating this argument which seems well-nigh unanswerable. He presents evidence from the Old Testament, the Gospels, the Pauline epistles, and the Apocalypse. The argument in brief is this.

Clearly the resurrection of the holy dead takes place at the Rapture of the Church (1 Thes. 4:16). Therefore, “wheresoever the resurrection is, there will the Rapture be also.” Upon examining passages that speak of the resurrection of the holy dead, which is the first resurrection (Rev. 20:5--6), we find that this first resurrection is associated with the coming of the Lord (Isa. 26:19), the conversion of Israel (Rom. 11:15), the inauguration of the Kingdom (Luke 14:14--15; Rev. 20:4--6), the giving of rewards (Rev. 11:15--18), the Great Tribulation coming before it (Dan. 12:1--3).

While it is logically urged against this view by the late Charles G. Trumbull in *The Advent Herald*, July 15, 1938, that it is not necessarily true that because two events are mentioned together they therefore occur simultaneously or in close proximity (as the two resurrections in Dan. 12:2 are 1000 years apart), nevertheless there are so many passages of Scripture that associate the first resurrection with the events that are connected with Christ’s glorious advent to set up His Kingdom, that it would seem more than strange, if there is a “first” resurrection at least seven years before the “first resurrection” of Scripture, that God did not give us a clear revelation to that effect. How there can be a “first” before the “first” is a riddle which finds a ready solution in the mathematical nightmare of some that the “first resurrection” began with that of Lazarus, included Christ’s resurrection, and includes the resurrection of the just when Christ returns!

Those who hold to the double coming of Christ have long associated the term *parousia* with the coming of Christ for His Church. This Greek word is translated “coming” in 1 Thes. 4:15 which all agree refers to the Rapture of the Church.

Much light has been thrown on the meaning of this word by the archaeologists. Deissmann in his *Light From The Ancient East* says that the word has been found in scores of papyri documents, and it is “a technical expression for the arrival or the visit of the king or the emperor.”

Furthermore, the word translated shout in 1 Thes. 4:16 occurs only at this point in the New Testament and means, according to the Greek scholar, A. T. Robertson, a military command. “Christ will come as conqueror,” he adds. Therefore this passage in 1 Thes. 4, which has been regarded as a proof of a secret rapture of the Church before Christ comes as King to set up His Kingdom, is a description of the very same event that will occur after the Tribulation when Christ comes in power and great glory like a conquering general. How can one expect the triumph of the Antichrist to follow this glorious coming?

It is enlightening to note that the term *parousia* is used in Matt. 24:3, although quite inconsistently the advocates of the pre-Tribulation rapture assure us that the coming in Matt. 24 is not for the Church. The same term is used in 2 Thes. 2:8 of the coming of Christ in power and glory to destroy the power of the Antichrist or Lawless One “with the brightness of His coming” (*parousia*) - Furthermore, John in 1 John 2:28 associates the *parousia* with

the public manifestation of Christ. Alexander Reese in *The Approaching Advent of Christ* has a very helpful chapter on the significance of this term.

Another line of proof that there will not be a double coming of Christ revolves about the meaning of the word “end” as used in the New Testament. In my judgment, Charles G. Trumbull’s review of the book by Reese, *The Approaching Advent of Christ*, which appeared in *The Advent Herald* of July 15, 1938, is unfair when it says: “The word ‘end’ does not always have the technical meaning which Reese ascribes to it.” And he gives five references in which the word is used when the end of the age is not in question (e. g. Malt. 26:58). The natural inference is that Reese ascribes to the word an unvarying technical sense. What Reese actually says is: “There is another word used in the Gospels for the end; it is telos, which, when used of the Last Things, means simply the End or close of the present world-period; the Day of the appearing of the Son of Man, our Lord and Savior.”

Reese proceeds to cite a number of passages which show that the end when used in the eschatological sense is associated with the Church’s hope of Christ’s coming. For example, 1 Cor. 1:7--8; Heb. 3:6, 14; 6:11; Rev. 2:25--26. In the light of these passages, we may fairly conclude that the end in Matt. 24:14 is the same end. If this is so, we shall believe that this preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom in all the world is proclaimed by the Church and not merely by a Jewish Tribulation remnant.

### **8. It is claimed that the epistles that were written for the special enlightenment of the Church make no mention of the Tribulation**

Here we encounter again the dangerous argument based on the silences of Scripture. Since “all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable,” and since portions other than the “Church epistles” seem to be clear in their testimony to the presence of the Church in the Tribulation, this argument appears to have a very slender foundation.

W. R. Newell is one exponent of this argument and he says in his commentary on the book of Revelation, p. 389: “The Great Tribulation is not once mentioned by Paul in his epistles which govern the churches (Romans to Philemon), nor in Hebrews; nor are the saints warned of it.”

To say that Paul does not once mention the Tribulation when he does deal in some detail with the chief figure of the Tribulation, the Antichrist, in 2 Thes. 2, is to make a statement that is not quite true. Furthermore, would W. R. Newell affirm that because certain “Church epistles” fail to teach the virgin birth of Christ therefore it is no part of the Christian faith? God evidently knew what He was doing when He failed to incorporate in the “Church epistles” detailed information about the Tribulation, for we find this in other portions of the Word which are intended to deal with matters of prophecy such as Daniel, Revelation, and Matthew 24. God wastes no words in needless repetition.

It is also not quite accurate to affirm that the saints are not warned of a coming Tribulation, for we find many a passage in these epistles written for the express purpose of preparing the saints for times of great suffering. To be sure, suffering has been their lot through the ages, but there is nothing to indicate the saints will be exempt from the last great trial. We must not suppose that the revelation concerning the Antichrist in 2 Thes. 2 was incorporated in a “Church epistle” merely to satisfy intellectual curiosity. The whole setting reveals a practical purpose to encourage believers, and in 2 Thes. 3:5 we find the apostle praying that the Lord may direct their hearts into a patient waiting for Christ.

### **9. Since the Church did not exist during the 69 weeks of Daniel, there is no reason for supposing it will be on earth during the 70th**

Dr. Thiessen in *Will the Church Pass Through the Tribulation?*, pp. 18--19, writing of the 70 weeks (Dan. 9:24-27), says: “The entire period has to do with Daniel’s people and Daniel’s holy city ... the Church is not at all in

view in that prophecy... Between the 69th and 70th weeks there is a long interval... The seventieth week is still future. If the Church did not exist during the weeks that are past, how can we suppose it to be on earth during the week that is yet to come? We must always remember that all these weeks are Jewish in nature.”

Granting that Daniel’s seventieth week comprehends the Great Tribulation, why must we suppose that Dan. 9:24-27 is an exhaustive description of that period? Dr. Thiessen’s statement carries that implication. He assumes that because the Church is not mentioned in this passage, it cannot be present in this period. True, there is no mention of the Church in Dan. 9 nor is it the clear subject of revelation at all in the Old Testament.

The argument from silence can easily be used to prove anything one wishes. If Thiessen argues that the Church will not be on earth because not mentioned in Dan. 9:24-27, and since he says that “all these weeks are Jewish in nature,” what right have we to believe that there will be any but Jews on earth during the Great Tribulation? If the Church will not be on earth then because not mentioned in so many words, why may we suppose there will be Gentiles on the earth in that day? This simply indicates the *reductio ad absurdum* to which the argument from the silences of Scripture passages leads.

It is not at all difficult to imagine how the Church can be on earth during the 70th week although it was not on earth during the 69 weeks. For, according to Thiessen himself, the Church came into existence in the interval preceding the 70th week, and it should not be difficult to account for its existence on earth during the 70th week, inasmuch as there is absolutely no clear Scriptural proof that it will be removed before the 70th week.

Furthermore, it should not be overlooked that in other descriptions of the Tribulation not found in Daniel, it is explicitly said that there will be elect on earth during the Tribulation and, as I have already pointed out, there is no reason for denying that these elect are the Church of Christ.

## **10. For the Church to go through the Tribulation is contrary to the plain order of events in the Apocalypse**

Such is the claim of Dr. C. I. Scofield. While it is true that there is much in the book of Revelation that is clear, the order of events in the book is not so “plain” as Scofield claims. For example, take the supposedly elementary question as to how much of that book is represented by the Great Tribulation. Scofield says the Tribulation comprises chapters 11-18 (p. 1337, Scofield Bible). W. R. Newell (p. 403, Exposition of Revelation) says it begins at chap. 13. While Thiessen in his book on the Tribulation, p. 20 claims the period comprises chapters 6-19.

It is commonly taught that the command to John the seer to “Come up hither” (Rev. 4:1) refers to the catching up of the Church at the Rapture. Nothing could be more arbitrary than to read the Rapture of the Church into the simple statement that John was caught up to heaven for the specific purpose of being given a revelation of the heavenly scene.

Even if we recognize that the words “After this” should be translated “After these things,” there is absolutely no proof that these words point to more than the sequence in which John received these revelations. After the revelations concerning the seven churches God gave him a revelation of the heavenly scene.

It is claimed by Scofield and others that the twenty-four elders of Rev. 4--S represent the Church in heaven which presupposes a prior rapture of the Church to heaven. Scofield sees “five inerrant marks” identifying them as representatives of the Church. He says that of all the redeemed, only the Church is said to be a priesthood, although he refers to the interesting parallel between these 24 elders and the 24 courses of the Levitical priesthood. If the elders represent any group at all, it would seem more logical to have them represent the Levitical priesthood.

Another of the “inerrant marks” is their testimony in Rev. 5:9--10. This helps his argument only if we accept the first person pronouns. But these are changed to the third person in the more correct Revised Version, and therefore his “inerrant mark” becomes considerably errant, for this testimony becomes simply a general ascription of praise to Christ the Lamb of God as the One who alone is worthy to open the seven-sealed book.

Thiessen and others believe the twenty-four elders are representative not alone of the Church but of the Church plus the saints of the Old Testament period. Even if it could be proved that the 24 elders are to be regarded in a representative capacity--which it cannot--why is it necessary to suppose that, if they represent the Church, they represent more than the saints who through death have gone on to be with the Lord? Why is it necessary to suppose the entire corporate Church must be represented? Furthermore, why must one assume that a resurrection has taken place? Visibility in John’s vision is not at all dependent on spirits being clothed with bodies, else how could he have seen angels?

Finally, there is no evidence to prove that they are human beings at all. Many of the greatest exegetes hold that they are angelic beings who lead in the praise and worship of heaven.

### **11. Since the coming of Christ is imminent, in the sense that no predicted event is first to take place, therefore the Tribulation will not take place before Christ comes and the Church will not pass through the period of trial**

If there is any one argument that is regarded as sufficient in itself to prove, to the satisfaction of many, that the Church will have no experience of the Tribulation trials, this is the one. It is practically taken for granted that the Scriptures teach the imminent, any-moment return of Christ.

For example, let us look at two testimonies in recent literature on the subject. Thiessen in his book on the Tribulation, p. 40, says of the term “imminency”: “This term does not mean of a certainty that He will come at once, (of course not!) but merely constant expectation of Him, on the ground that there is no revealed event that must precede His return.” Again, W. M. Robertson in *The Sure Word of Prophecy*, p. 257, says: “When we turn to the Pauline epistles we find the apostle urging the saints to look for the Lord Jesus the Savior without any signs preceding His coming.” All of which is quite in line with the remark by the older commentator, Joseph Seiss, that the Second Coming is “pledged to no moment, possible at any.”

In spite of the popularity of this view, I do not think it is the teaching of Scripture, and I propose to demonstrate this by the thirteen considerations that follow.

#### **A. Implications Of The Great Commission**

The commission to “teach all nations” and to witness to Christ “unto the uttermost parts of the earth” of necessity implies a very considerable lapse of time, nor does this implication hinge on the unscriptural notion held by many that the Church is commanded to convert the world. Thiessen reminds us that according to Col. 1:6, 23 Paul claims the Gospel had been preached in all the world in his day. However, according to Bishop H. C. G. Moule in *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Paul is using a perfectly natural hyperbole to say that wherever the Gospel had gone it had always proved its proper power. “The readers would well understand that Paul meant not that the Gospel had reached every spot of Europe, Asia, and Africa.”

Not only does the Great Commission imply a long period of time for its accomplishment, but the promise of the continuing presence of Christ is valid, not until the Tribulation but “even unto the consummation of the age” which takes place when Christ comes in glory to establish His Kingdom, as Matt. 24:3 implies. Therefore we shall have to conclude that a proper understanding of the historic fulfillment of the Great Commission gives scant justification for the imminent, any-moment theory of the Second Coming.

## **B. The Parables Of Matthew 13**

Here again we find the implication of a very considerable passage of time. The growth of seeds to maturity suggests a time-consuming process. In the parable of the tares, it is particularly significant that the harvest takes place at the end of the age when true believers and unsaved professors will be separated, the true believers shining forth in the Kingdom. Apparently the Rapture of believers takes place at the time of the setting up of the Kingdom, not seven years before.

Furthermore, the Antichrist can hardly be thought of as exercising his power after the harvest, after the end of the age, and therefore his power will be manifested before the end of the age and the gathering of the wheat. Since this is so, obviously Christ's coming hinges upon the prior manifestation of the Antichrist and therefore is not "imminent."

## **C. Paul's Expectation Of Execution**

According to 2 Tim. 4:6-8 Paul came to believe that not the second coming of Christ but death was the event he should anticipate. True, he said in 1 Thes. 4:17 "We which are alive and remain shall be caught up," but this "we" does not necessarily imply that he felt sure he himself would be alive at the Second Advent. He was simply referring to the portion of the Christian Church, of which he was a member, that would be alive at that time. However, I would not expect this argument to carry a disproportionate amount of weight.

## **D. Jesus' Prediction Of Peter's Martyrdom**

In John 21:18-19 Jesus predicted that when Peter became old another would gird him and carry him whither he would not. How can one say, then, that Peter believed in the imminent, any-moment view of the return of Christ? Dr. Thiessen faces this problem, pp. 40-41, and gives a two-fold reply. First he says: "It is not certain that Peter understood this saying. It was many years after Peter's execution when John made this statement and applied it to Peter's method of exit from this life."

In reply to Dr. Thiessen, I would remind the reader that Godet and others have not entertained so low a view of Peter's mentality, fully believing he understood what Jesus said. But whether Peter understood the nature of what would happen to him is quite beside the point. Peter must have been bright enough to know that when Jesus said "when thou shalt be old" Jesus meant that Peter would live to old age. Peter evidently was not already old and therefore had many years yet to live. How could he have held the imminent theory of Christ's return?

Next, Dr. Thiessen, apparently sensing the flimsy basis for his argument, seeks in apparent desperation for some passage that would seem to teach that Peter taught the coming of Christ as imminent, and he chooses, of all passages, Acts 3:19-21, a citation that proves the very opposite of what he wants it to prove. Says he: "However it may be as to Peter's understanding of the Master's word to him, we find that he preached the return of Christ as an imminent possibility right after the day of Pentecost."

A number of considerations will show that Thiessen is even more involved in error now. First, let me ask, which of the alleged two comings of Christ do Premillennialists hold to be imminent? The Rapture, of course, for that is said to be the next event on the prophetic calendar. But which coming of Christ is Peter referring to in this passage? Certainly not the Rapture. Gaebelein says that so far from this being the Rapture, Peter at that time was wholly ignorant that there was to be a Rapture of the Church. This coming, then, says Gaebelein, is the glorious advent of Christ to establish His Kingdom. And Gaebelein is obviously right, for Peter goes on to say that this advent was predicted "by the mouth of all His holy

prophets since the world began.” And you cannot find a Premillennialist who teaches the Rapture of the Church is in Old Testament prophecy. Obviously then Peter was not teaching the imminent coming of Christ here.

Another matter of interest in this connection is that Acts 3:21 which speaks of heaven receiving Christ until the restitution of all things absolutely forbids the thought of His leaving heaven for earth until that time. In other words, there is no room whatever for a coming of Christ at least seven years before His leaving heaven to restore all things!

### **E. The Single Object Of The Believer’s Expectation**

Dr. Thiessen, p. 39, says that when Paul in Titus 2:13 urges us to look for the “blessed hope,” he did not ask us to look for the Tribulation and the Antichrist. Of course one might mention any number of doctrines that Paul did not refer to in any particular verse or passage. That Paul said nothing in Titus 2:13 of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in no way invalidates that truth which remains as a part of the hope of believers in spite of the fact that other predicted events constituting part of the expectation of believers will transpire first. Thiessen asks: “How can we wait for One who cannot come until several other momentous things have taken place?” Why we cannot anticipate the coming of events that serve as signs of Christ’s advent as well as anticipate Christ’s advent I cannot understand. Many could profit by meditating on the implications of the words in Matt. 24:33, “when ye shall see all these things.” In this connection should be read Luke 21:28, “And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up! . . .” “These things” include the signs of Christ’s advent that He has just mentioned, including the Tribulation.

Jesus would not have told His followers of the signs of His advent if He had believed our mental outlook could hold but one anticipation of a future event! So far as the expectation of passing through a period of trial before Christ returns weakening our hold on the “blessed hope” and watering it down to a vague general expectation, as Thiessen intimates, it would serve the very opposite purpose of strengthening our desire to welcome Him whose presence alone will banish the sorrows of the present.

If looking for the signs of Christ’s coming would tend to divert the gaze from the “blessed hope,” and if, as Thiessen claims, “Such signs as Scripture lists all have to do with the Revelation and not with the Rapture” (p. 45), then the very arguments against the substitution of signs for the hope of Christ’s coming would apply with equal force to the Tribulation saints. Is it likely that the saints of the Tribulation time will become so engrossed in looking for the cosmic signs of the returning Christ (the darkened sun and moon, etc.) that they will lose sight of Christ’s coming which those signs will quickly introduce? Surely not.

The charge that signs only serve to divert attention from our Lord’s coming or cool our ardor for it bears very serious implications concerning our Lord’s wisdom in having given any revelation concerning signs. Tregelles, as quoted by Reese, p. 229, well says: “He who looks for promised events as indications of the Lord’s advent, will not rest for a moment in the events themselves; their value is that they lead on the thoughts and affections to Him for whom the Church is called to watch and wait, and who has Himself promised these signs to His expecting people.”

Surely few of the pre-Tribulation Rapturists would allow themselves to go so far as Dr. A. C. Gaebelein who charges that those who look for signs are to be likened to the drunken servant of the parable in Matt. 24:45-51. A cursory examination of this parable will reveal that it was not the view that his Lord would delay his coming but the uses to which he put his time that merited rebuke and proved he deserved the sad end of the hypocrite. Surely it is far from true and charitable to classify with that evil servant the many sincere and mighty men of God who have looked for signs. Dr. Gaebelein would do well to recall that W. J. Erdman, one of God’s spiritual giants, did not believe in the imminent, any-moment view of Christ’s

coming, and, so far from being in the class of the evil servant of Matt. 24, served along with Dr. Gaebelain himself as a consulting editor of the Scofield Reference Bible.

## **F. The Scriptures Indicate A Considerable Interval Between Jesus' Ascension And His Return**

Drs. Ironside and Thiessen and others who have dealt with the question of the Church in the Tribulation recognize these scriptures as a real difficulty that their imminent-theory must face. For example, Dr. Ironside in his *Not Wrath but Rapture*, p. 17, truly states: "In Luke 21 it is evident that considerable time must elapse between the overthrow of Jerusalem under Titus and this coming of the Son of Man." (The passage predicts the dispersion of the Jews into "all nations" etc.) And yet on p. 42 Dr. Ironside dares to say: "There is not the least hint that believers of this dispensation were to look forward to a long series of events preceding the return of the Lord Jesus. . . This blessed hope is always presented as imminent." How it could have been an imminent hope to the early church, in the any-moment sense of imminency, in view of the long period of time that had to elapse after the destruction of Jerusalem is rather hard to understand.

Dr. Thiessen in his brochure, p. 43, refers to the parable of the nobleman who went into a "far country" as an illustration of the difficulty facing his any-moment theory. He says: "There is no need to think that the disciples understood the Lord to speak of any long interval."

True, the particular length of the interval is of no significance. Whether the interval be relatively long or short, one cannot say that those to whom was given this parabolic message were led to believe in an any-moment return of Christ. The fact of there being an interval at all rules out the imminency of His return for a time.

## **G. The Predictions Of Apostasy**

Those familiar with historical processes know that it takes time for apostasy to develop. Both Peter and Paul predicted the professing Church would be characterized in the last days by a marked falling away from the faith. As Dr. Charles R. Erdman says in his *Pastoral Epistles*, p. 76: "Paul never affirms that the event is near. In his earliest letters he specifically taught that an apostasy would first develop and a 'man of sin' appear. 2 Thes. 2:3. How long the delay may be is never foretold." This fact of a developing apostasy hardly comports with the imminent, any-moment theory of Christ's coming.

## **H. Parables Of The Virgins And The Talents**

Both of these parables in Matt. 25 are concerned to show how believers are to use the intervening time before the return of Christ. In v. 5 we are told the Bridegroom tarried. How long He would tarry is beside the point. The teaching is that an interval between the Lord's departure and return would take place. In the parable of the talents we find in v. 19 the significant words: "After a long time the lord of those servants cometh." They are so significant that C.H.M. (Charles H. McIntosh) in his exposition of this parable that occupies ten pages in his *Papers on the Lord's Coming* completely ignores them!

Thiessen, however, does not sidestep the issue but says, p. 19: "This, too, does not imply more than the lifetime of the apostles, although we now know that the time is much longer." If imminency may be so defined that it does not necessarily mean an any-moment return but sometime within one's lifetime, one can readily subscribe to that, for the fulfillment of the signs of Christ's coming could easily take place within the lifetime of all people except the most advanced in age. But this is quite a different position from what Thiessen elsewhere seems to teach.

## **I. Paul In The Pastoral Epistles Makes Provision For The Permanent Organization And Continuing Ministry Of The Church**

This point is emphasized by Dr. Charles R. Erdman in his *Pastoral Epistles*, p. 113. He reminds us that Paul did not consider Christ's coming as imminent. In 2 Tim. 2:2 Paul encourages Timothy to arrange to educate other men in the faith so that they will be able to pass on the good news. All this, of course, involves time.

## **J. Paul Explicitly Teaches Christ's Coming Is Not Imminent In 2 Thes. 2:1--3 And He Proceeds To Prove It**

Paul urges that we should let no man deceive us by any means. Why? There must transpire two events before Christ comes, namely, the apostasy and the manifestation of the Man of Sin. I realize that "the day of Christ" here is translated "the Day of the Lord" in the Revised Version. But if we should grant that "the Day of the Lord" represents the second phase of Christ's coming which has nothing to do with the blessed hope of the Church, why should Paul be so greatly concerned that no man deceive the Church concerning an event that allegedly has nothing to do with the Church? Surely the theory that would divide the Lord's coming into two distinct events separated by a period of at least seven years is a man-made notion that has caused infinite confusion of thought. Paul elsewhere is greatly concerned lest men be drawn away from the simplicity that is in Christ.

## **K. The Messages To The Seven Churches**

It is a widely accepted view that the messages to the seven churches of Revelation are a prophetic fore view of the seven phases of the spiritual history of the Church from A.D. 96 to the end of the age. Such a view involves quite a considerable lapse of time. It is obviously utterly impossible to reconcile this historical view of the seven churches with the imminent, any-moment view of Christ's return.

## **L. Exhortations To Constant Expectation And Watchfulness**

This is one of the strongest proofs, says Dr. Thiessen, p. 38, that the Rapture of the Church will take place before the Tribulation. I would remind the reader that the very chapter in which these exhortations are so prominent, Matt. 24, tells of the coming of Christ, not for the Church but in judgment and glory to set up His Kingdom. At least, this is the claim of the pre-Tribulation Rapturists. And yet following that picture of Christ's coming we find the exhortations to watch and be ready. If Thiessen and his school would be consistent, they would tell us that these exhortations have no relevancy for the Church, since it is not the Church's hope to which these exhortations are tied. But Thiessen inconsistently claims, p. 38: "They belong to the Church as well as to Israel." It is true that they do but very unbecoming for him to make such a claim.

Thiessen says we know they are also intended for the Church because they are repeated in the Epistles. And he gives 1 Thes. 5:6 as an illustration, again proving his inconsistency, for Paul in that chapter has just predicted the coming "Day of the Lord" which we are told is the second stage of the Lord's coming, the stage in relation to which Christians, according to Thiessen's theory, need not be watchful!

A second passage he cites is Rev. 3:3 "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." But suppose we do watch? What then? Surely the conclusion is warranted: "You will know what hour I will come!" That is to say, not literally the hour, of course, but as the signs appear the conviction will deepen that Christ's coming is near. And let me emphasize at this point that watchfulness is something more than a vague, sentimental longing for Christ.

It implies watching for the God-given signs of His appearing. Thank God! We need not be in darkness so that the day of Christ's coming will overtake us as a thief!

We are told by Dr. Scofield that the personal coming of Christ in fulfillment of the upper chamber promise is made the ground of many exhortations to holy living. The believer is deprived of that motive, he says, if the coming of the Lord is so related to other prophetic events as to deprive the believer of a personal expectation.

Among other passages Scofield cites 1 Pet. 1:13. Here the word describing the Second Advent is "revelation," a word which Dr. Scofield, in his Bible Correspondence Course, p. 619, says always refers to the second stage of Christ's Second Advent, when He comes, not to catch up the Church, but to establish His Kingdom. If the Second Advent is to be distinguished as two events, as Scofield maintains, and the first part of the advent is the Church's hope, why does not Peter tie his practical exhortation to the first phase and not to the second? The answer is very simple. Peter knows of no double coming of Christ. And so we are forced to conclude that the post-tribulation rapture doctrine, so far from depriving the believer of a personal expectation, preserves the force of the practical exhortations based upon the promises of Christ's coming to establish His Kingdom, saving them from being rendered nugatory by a false theory of our Lord's advent.

### **M. The Moral Value Of The Imminent Hope**

We are told that the any-moment doctrine of Christ's coming tends to keep the believer on moral and spiritual tip-toe. I would not care to deny the psychological value of this teaching. However, the question of value has no place in a discussion of whether a theory is true or not, and I beg leave to introduce it merely because those with whom I disagree do so.

Surely no sincere Christian would think for a moment of seeking to improve on God's methods of awakening love for the appearing of Christ. Furthermore, no instructed believer doubts for a moment that our Lord's eye is continually upon us, that nothing escapes Him, and that our sense of shame at being found doing anything out of keeping with His will should be quite as sharp the moment the conviction is wrought in our hearts by His Spirit as it would be by the thought of Christ returning at any moment.

Then too, however young or healthy we may be, we never know when death may overtake us, and that thought can serve quite as effectively as a psychological check, if such we need. And certainly no honest Christian would cling to a doctrine that is not clearly taught in the Word simply because he fancies it may have a good effect upon people, any more than he would be willing from a noble motive to tell a child a "white lie."

Reese, in this connection, well says, p. 231: "Certain it is, therefore, that the Lord Jesus did not think that the moral influence of His coming was in any way impaired by the instruction that He Himself gave concerning events that would intervene; for He, in answer to the question of the apostles, taught that such events would intervene before He returned."

### **12. The last state of the Church on earth is not one of suffering and persecution**

They tell us that the last state of the Church will be one of luke-warmness and ease and declension. While this is a true statement, we need to keep in mind that the question at issue is not whether the professing Church will pass through the Tribulation but whether the true Body of Christ will pass through it. The true Church of Christ will never become apostate.

But even if the true Church is rather lukewarm in the last days, in the message to the Church of Laodicea we find our Lord advising them to buy of Him gold, tried in the fire. What fire is this if not the fire of Tribulation?

Again, we find in Rev. 3:21 a promise to the overcomer, which of course implies exposure to some trial or testing. The way to warm a lukewarm church and stir into fresh loyalty those within its ranks who truly belong to Christ may be to subject it to some sharp test of its faith.

Furthermore, most expositors who make the claim that we have just noticed regard the epistles to the Seven Churches as not only a fore view of the historic development of the Church through the centuries but as a picture of seven types of churches that can be found in any age. If this is true, it is hardly consistent to base an argument for the exemption of the Church from the Tribulation Period on but one of the seven types of churches that will be found in the last days.

**13. Two predicted events must take place between Christ's coming for the Church and His coming in judgment--the marriage supper of the Lamb, and the judgment of the believer's works for rewards. These must occupy a considerable period of time, thus disproving the belief Christ's coming is a single undivided event.**

As we have already seen, the belief that Christ's coming consists of two events separated by a period of years is not susceptible of proof in the Scriptures.

Furthermore, let us look at the only passage that speaks of the marriage supper of the Lamb, Rev. 19:7-9, to see if we can discover when it will take place. It is after the heavenly beings rejoice that divine justice has disposed of Babylon the Great, Mother of Harlots, that they rejoice that "the marriage of the Lamb is come and His Wife hath made herself ready." Marriage speaks of union, and this union of Christ and His Church will be consummated at His coming. Beginning with v. 11 we have in symbolism the picture of Christ's coming as a victor. If this order of revelation will be the order of fulfillment, then we discover that the marriage of the Lamb takes place at His coming and this is immediately followed by the marriage supper. The nature of that gladsome fellowship is not revealed, nor are we told how much time it will require. It is quite possible it will occupy a very short time, so short, that no sooner is it over than Christ comes on toward the earth to give vent to God's righteous wrath and to establish His Kingdom. At any rate, no one has a right to say that this marriage supper coincides with the period of Tribulation, for if the order of events in Revelation proves to be the historical order, this supper does not take place until after the destruction of the great Harlot, Babylon, at the end of the Tribulation period, and after the coming of Christ that immediately follows that judgment on Babylon.

Now as to the judgment of the believer's works, we know that this takes place at the coming of Christ. The works will be revealed by fire (1 Cor. 3:15) and subjected to a test to discover which works will abide. This takes place at the resurrection of the just according to Rev. 11: 15--18 at which time Christ sets up His Kingdom. There is no indication of the amount of time required. Certainly the whole process could be accomplished in a moment of time. Who would care to limit our infinite God? Sad indeed is the anthropomorphism that argues that such an enormous task as that of giving rewards to the righteous must occupy a very considerable amount of time!

**14. The completion of the Church coincides with the completion of the fullness of the Gentiles. The fullness of the Gentiles is followed by the fullness of Israel. In this sequence is a proof the Church will be exempt from the Tribulation.**

This is another argument that presupposes a double coming of Christ. Let us ask: When does the fullness of Israel take place? According to Rom. 11:26 it takes place at the coming of Christ as the Deliverer and at that time "all Israel shall be saved." This is confirmed in Zech. 12 which says the Jews will look upon Christ whom

they have pierced and their hearts will be overwhelmed with mourning, and a fountain will be opened to them for sin and uncleanness (13:1). This coming of Christ is, to those who hold to the double coming of Christ, the second aspect of His advent when He comes to destroy the Gentile nations that are massed about Jerusalem (Zech. 12) and to set up His Kingdom.

This is the very time, however, when the first resurrection takes place and the Rapture of the Church happens, so that we must conclude that the completion of the Church takes place at the same crisis as the conversion and fullness of Israel. Therefore there is here no argument for a rapture of the Church before the Tribulation.

**15. The “Son of Man” is a title used of our Lord in relation to Israel, the earthly people. Therefore wherever it is used in connection with the coming of Christ, it can have no reference to the Church, as in Matt. 24:30. Therefore the coming for the Church is a separate event from Christ’s glorious coming to Israel and to set up His Kingdom.**

From a careful study of the Word of God we learn that the title “Son of Man” is not always used of Christ in relation to Israel and therefore the line of reasoning that ends in the conclusion that there is a coming of Christ before His coming to Israel is invalid.

The question of why Jesus used the title “Son of Man” has perplexed the greatest thinkers in the theological world. In an article in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia on the subject, Dr. James Stalker gives his opinion that while the term, as used in such passages as Dan. 7:13--14; Matt. 24:30; 26:64, is especially frequent in passages referring to His future coming in judgment, the term finds its greatest significance as an expression of Christ’s connection with all men in sympathy, fortunes, and destiny. “He felt Himself to be identified with all as their brother, their fellow-sufferer, their representative, and champion, and, in some respects, the deepest word He ever spake was ‘For the Son of Man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.’” (Mark 10:45.)

From this we can hardly conclude that the title has reference only to Israel. In fact, in a passage that clearly refers to the Church, the term is used, namely, in Rev. 1 where the “Son of Man” is seen standing in the midst of the seven candlesticks which are representative of the Churches.

**16. The terms “elect” and “saints” when applied to people in the Tribulation cannot refer to the Church but must be applied to the Jewish remnant**

Apparently sins of terminology are not confined to the Modernists who have often been guilty of emptying evangelical terms of their traditional, evangelical content!

We are confidently told that the coming of Christ as described in Matthew 24 is not for the Church. And yet our Lord plainly says in vv. 22, 24, 31 that the Tribulation will be shortened for the sake of the elect, the elect will almost be deceived by false prophets, and Christ comes in glory to gather His elect. As it is well known, the term elect is used of the Church. But the theory of a pre-Tribulation rapture must be saved at all costs and therefore this term elect is given a meaning which it nowhere else bears in the New Testament, and is made to refer to a Jewish elect.

W. S. Hooton in *The Life of Faith* (London), June 14, 1939, well says: “The view that there are two aspects of the Second Coming, not two stages, avoids the necessity for special pleading, in attributing to the word ‘elect’ in Matt. 24:22, 24, 31 a different meaning from that which it ordinarily bears.”

Of the sixteen occurrences of the term elect in the New Testament, one refers to certain angels, another refers to Christ, and the other fourteen very obviously refer to the Church or Christians. To make the term refer to any others requires “special pleading,” as Hooton points out.

One of the special pleaders is Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse who in an article in Revelation, Nov. 1942, says: "Any attempt to make the phrase 'the elect' in Matthew 24 refer to the Church in the present age leads to a confusion that is simply chaotic". Words no longer have meaning in Bible study.

Who, let us ask, introduces confusion, who empties words of their meaning? The one who allows the word to retain its usual meaning in the New Testament, or the one who arbitrarily assigns it a meaning that is nowhere else found in the New Testament?

When we ask Dr. Barnhouse who the elect of Matthew 24 are, if they are not the Church, we find his answer in the above-mentioned article. He says these elect are the same as "the great multitude which no man could number" of Rev. 7:9. But let us ask, how did they hear the truth that saved them? Through the preaching of the 144,000 Jews, mentioned earlier in that chapter. "These all go out preaching the Gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ," says Barnhouse. But let us ask, how were the 144,000 saved? He says they were saved as a result of the preaching of Moses and Elijah whom Barnhouse may be right in identifying with the two witnesses of Rev. 11.

If the reader will take the time to read Rev. 11:3--12 and Rev. 7 he will very likely conclude that Dr. Barnhouse has taken very great liberties with the actual Scripture record, but quite unintentionally of course. In the first place, he will find that there is absolutely nothing to indicate that the message of the two witnesses was a gospel of salvation. So far from words of grace proceeding from their mouths, fire will proceed from their mouths if any dare hurt them. Furthermore, they will be given power to smite the earth with plagues. While it is true we are not told they exercise that power, still it hardly reads like preparation for an evangelistic gathering!

Then too, the careful reader will note that the passage, so far from indicating that even one person was saved as a result of their preaching, indicates that their message antagonized the people who heard it to such an extent that "they that dwell upon the earth" rejoice and make merry when they learn of the death of the two witnesses! Again, there is absolutely nothing to indicate that the salvation of the great multitude of Rev. 7:9 is to be attributed to the preaching of the 144,000. The fact is, it nowhere says the 144,000 preached the Gospel, or preached anything for that matter! Surely the Word of God deserves better treatment in the house of its friends!

And finally Dr. Barnhouse closes this article, which is a masterpiece of confused thinking and quite unworthy of his extraordinary endowments, by assuming the term "great" as applied to the Tribulation can be interpreted only in a qualitative sense as referring to the intensity of the suffering when a simple reading of the few passages that speak of a Great Tribulation points to an emphasis on the quantitative sense. It is to affect the whole world. The great saved multitude of Rev. 7:14 that comes out of Great Tribulation is said to come out of "all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues." Nor will the suffering be of such severity as to prevent the period of Tribulation being a time of salvation. While I have no desire to minimize the severity of the sufferings of that period, it is to be remembered that the vials of divine wrath affect only the unsaved, whether Jews or Gentiles, while it is true that the saved who refuse allegiance to the Antichrist will be subject to persecution and some will be martyred.

Therefore it is quite unfair for Dr. Barnhouse to close his article with the words: "If the Church is to pass through the Tribulation, then farewell blessed hope, then welcome the coffin, then thrice welcome the undertaker!" The book of Revelation, after describing the trials of the last Tribulation, closes with the appeal, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"--words that will unquestionably be on every redeemed lip in that day. Then the blessed hope will shine with new luster, will awaken a lyric joy in the breast of every born-again soul! It will not be "Farewell, blessed hope!" but "Welcome, blessed hope!"

We have still to consider another term that is applied to sufferers in the Tribulation which is also applicable to the Church--the term saints, as found in the book of Revelation. In Rev. 8:3-4 we read of the prayers of the saints. In 13:7 the beast makes war against the saints. In 13:10 the saints patiently await the time of divine

retribution against their enemies. The same is found in 14:12. Some of the saints are martyred in 16:6; 17:6, and 18:24. The saints are rewarded at the last trumpet in 11:18. Who are all these saints? We know that saints is the common New Testament term for the Church or members of the Body of Christ. If these are not the Church saints, then surely John would have plainly said so, for he very well knew that to use the term without qualification would be tantamount to saying it is the Church of Christ to which he was referring.

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

We are told that this verse teaches the Church will escape the trials of the Tribulation by means of a prior rapture to heaven. Reese, p. 213, calls the use of this text for such a purpose a “mockery of consistency, I had almost said, of honesty. A moment ago they were all affirming that ‘the Son of Man’ was a title never used when Christ’s relation to the Church was in view; it was a finger-post to tell us that Israel or the world was under consideration. Yet here they are with their short memories demanding that this time we should see the Church here. We will oblige them: the Church is in view here, but not in the sense, nor at the time, the theorists wish. They who ‘stand before the Son of Man’ are the raptured saints, the Elect, gathered on the Day of the Son of Man, as Matt. 24:31, 41 and Luke 17:30--36 conclusively prove.”

As to the verb escape, we are told by Dr. A. T. Robertson in his Word Studies that the verb means to *escape out*. Therefore we may say that it refers to those who are Christ’s own who will at the end of the Tribulation escape out of that scene by being raptured up to meet Christ in the air while the others remain to be engulfed in the judgment that the soon returning Son of Man will inaugurate.

Dr. Thiessen, p. 6, takes the extraordinary view that the “these things that shall come to pass” is synonymous with the words “that day” of v. 34. In other words, “that day” of v. 34 refers to the Great Tribulation. The context clearly shows the day referred to is that of the Lord’s return, mentioned in v. 27. Scofield rightly confirms this in his paragraph heading in his reference Bible, “Warnings in view of the Lord’s return.” It is described as a day that will come without warning and as a snare or trap to those who are not prepared. This clearly points to the aspect of our Lord’s coming as a thief, and Scofield rightly refers, in the margin of his Bible, to 1 Thes. 5:2 in confirmation of this. Nowhere does the Bible speak of the coming of the Tribulation as a sudden surprise, nor does it enjoin watchfulness and prayer and preparation for the Tribulation.

**18. Rev. 3:10 “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth.”**

This is the proof text that is quoted most frequently in support of the contention that the Church will be raptured away before the Tribulation. We shall want to look at it with considerable attention.

Much hinges on the meaning of the preposition from (Greek ek). Alford is a grammatical authority often quoted at this point. He says the word means” ‘out of the midst of’: but whether by immunity from, or by being brought safe through, the preposition does not clearly define.”

Another argument relates to the meaning of the phrase “them that dwell upon the earth” or “earth-dwellers.” It is claimed that this is a technical expression for those who are not believers, who settle down in this world, in contrast to those whose citizenship is in heaven. Thiessen reminds us of Thayer’s opinion that the word “dwell” in the original is an especially strong word, having the idea of permanence. And Thiessen adds, p. 22: “Thus the judgment referred to in Rev. 3:10 is directed against the earth-dwellers of that day, against those who have settled down in the earth as their real home, who have identified themselves with the earth’s commerce and religion.”

Even if we grant this technical meaning of the word, it does not follow that everyone living on the earth at that time will be an “earth-dweller” any more than it is true to-day. Those who say the Church will go through the Tribulation do not claim the Church will be the object of the divine wrath that will be poured out on the “earth-dwellers.” Furthermore, it is rather dangerous to base an argument on an alleged specialized meaning of a word, for we may easily prove too much! Dr. Thiessen conveniently fails to mention that the same Greek word for “dwell” is used of our Lord dwelling in Capernaum (Matt. 4:13) and of the “saints” in Lydda (Acts 9:32). Surely in these cases it bears no evil implication! And so we may say that any argument based on the technical meaning of words in this verse is quite beside the point.

Let us look beyond the grammar of this verse, which admittedly is inconclusive, and examine the context. “Behold, I come quickly” is the word of encouragement that immediately follows the reference to the hour of trial. What greater encouragement to a Church that is being severely tested?

Furthermore, we must not overlook the significance of the words, “Him that overcometh,” in v. 12. Do they not imply that God’s people will be subjected to some kind of severe test, even the tribulatory test that was mentioned but two verses before? It is a Christian Church that is being addressed in these verses and it is in the Church that the overcomers appear.

Reese, p. 200, well says that it is a mere assumption that the only way God can preserve His Church from the Great Tribulation is by rapturing her to heaven above. He says: “As a matter of fact, the Rapture is not so much as mentioned or hinted at; so long, therefore, as another possible means of preservation out of the hour of Tribulation exists, it is a mere assumption that the Church must be raptured away in order to fulfill this promise of Christ. This very book of Revelation reveals the possibility and certainty of a people in relationship with God being thus preserved from the Great Tribulation. We are told that the Sun-clad Woman flees to the wilderness, and is there protected by God from precisely the hour of the last Great Tribulation--“a thousand and two hundred and three-score days” (12:6, 14). Not all the power of the dragon can avail to reach or touch her. Not a word is said about her being raptured out of the world, yet the Woman is untouched by the final persecution under Antichrist.”

### **19. 1 Thes. 1:10 “And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come”**

This verse is another alleged proof of a rapture of the Church before the Tribulation. First, let us ask what Paul means by the words, “the wrath to come?” We know that “wrath” may be used in any one of three senses. It may refer to the divine wrath manifested during the Tribulation; it may refer to the divine wrath against the ungodly at Christ’s coming in glory; or it may refer to the unending wrath of God as known in hell.

Which is the meaning in Paul’s mind in this verse? Very obviously it is the wrath that is manifested at the coming of Christ, for His coming has just been mentioned in this verse! Therefore, the wrath referred to has nothing whatever to do with tribulational judgments but rather with the coming of Him who will tread the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of almighty God. From this latter wrath the Church will of course be exempt.

### **20. 1 Thes. 5:1-9**

*“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they*

*that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."*

This passage is often invoked to prove the Church will not come into the wrath that will be manifested during the Tribulation. Much confusion has been caused by the wholly unjustified assumption that Paul is dealing in this chapter with a different subject from that discussed in chapter four. We are told that in chapter four he was dealing with the Rapture of the Church, but in chapter five he is speaking, not of believers, but of unbelievers, not of the Rapture of the Church but of the glorious coming of Christ in judgment upon an unbelieving world.

This confusion is due partly to the unfortunate chapter division. In chapter four Paul has just described the "blessed hope" of the Church, the gathering of the saints by the Lord at His coming. A natural question arises in the minds of His readers: "When will this take place?" And so he proceeds, without the slightest change in the subject, to answer the question "when?" The words of v. 1, "But of the times and seasons," clearly link the two chapters. Paul says they had no need of his elaborating on the question of the time because he had already told them Christ "so cometh as a thief." The "so" is a term indicating manner. It clearly speaks of the unexpectedness of His coming. It does not refer to the thief's purpose to destroy, as Newell and others affirm. It simply means His coming is without warning.

However, he makes it plain that that aspect of His coming is true only for those who are in spiritual darkness, as we indicated earlier in this book. "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief!" He does not say that that day will not overtake the brethren. He merely says it will not overtake them as a thief. Those who anticipate His coming will not be caught napping!

Then Paul gives an earnest exhortation to watchfulness and sobriety which would be utterly without meaning if Paul intended to say that the Church to which this exhortation was addressed will have been out of the world several years before the coming of this Day.

Therefore, in view of this Day which is surely coming to believers as well as to unbelievers, the Lord's own should "be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation." The salvation here referred to is not salvation from the penalty of sin, for they already were "children of light." It is the salvation that consists of the final redemption of the body, the deliverance from the very presence of sin which is assured the believer at Christ's return. In the Day of the Lord the believer is not the object of divine wrath but experiences the finishing touches of God's salvation. Therefore we shall not misunderstand v. 9, "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." It does not say the Church will be raptured away before that Day, but the very opposite is implied. The Church will be here and "obtain salvation"--in the final and complete sense.

If there is a secret rapture of the Church some years before the Day of the Lord, we should not find Christians looking for that Day, nor should we find practical exhortations given to Christians in view of the coming Day of the Lord. But since we do find believers looking for that Day and that they are given moral and spiritual advice in view of the coming of that Day, we may be sure they will be on earth when that Day comes.

## **Concluding Remarks**

Therefore, we do well to read God's Word with discernment and with the continual prayer on our lips that we may be so filled with His love and so faithful in His service that that Day will not overtake us as a thief.

One day I was meditating on Rev. 22 and apparently the words, "Behold, I come quickly!" had been especially fastened in my consciousness. Sometime during the following night I heard our baby boy crying apparently in great terror as he awoke from a nightmare. As I, half awake, leaped from bed and drew on my slippers I found

myself saying audibly, "Behold, I come quickly!" A few moments later, when fully conscious, I recalled the exclamation that had been uttered in my haste to hurry to the little one and comfort him. In this experience I find a parable. When our Lord hears His Church crying to Him in great distress, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!", will He not reply, "Behold, I come quickly!"? The answer may not be in an audible voice but in a deepening consciousness that the shadows of earth's darkest night will soon give way to the dawning of the morning.

My final plea to the reader is that he not rest his convictions upon anything in this book that is of human authorship, and therefore subject to error, but that like the Bereans of old he will search the Scriptures daily to see whether these things are so. Dr. R. C. McQuilkin well says in the introduction to one of his booklets on the parables: "Second-hand Bible study is the bane of many earnest Christians to-day and leaves them dependent on some human teacher whose interpretations come to have for them the authority of infallible truth."

I can do no better than to close with a quotation from Nathaniel West who has been called the most learned of American students of unfulfilled prophecy. ". . . The utterly unscriptural, any-moment theory of our Lord's Second Coming: a theory which makes of Christ and His apostles self-contradictory teachers, and of the Scriptures wholly unreliable oracles. No delusion more pleasing and sweet on the one hand, or more wild, groundless, and injurious to truth and faith, on the other, has ever captivated the minds of men, than this one of an any-moment, unseen, secret advent, resurrection, and rapture, a delusion condemned and exposed on almost every page of the Word of God. An unconditional, immediate, impending, any-moment imminency of an event, detached from all the signs that herald its approach, and which has lasted 1800 years, is an imminency that may last for 1800 years more. Such is not the believer's hope! To watch ourselves, to watch against the snares, subterfuges, sins and temptations that beset us, to watch lest our garments be taken from us, to watch for the improvement of our talents, to watch that our vessels have oil in them--and in view of an account when the Lord comes, to watch the signs of the times, the events which are the footsteps of the coming Lord, the spread of the Gospel, the rise of lawlessness, the increase of apostasy, the interest in Israel, the attitude of the nations, our souls ever directed to the realization of His blessed hope, is to watch for the coming of the Lord, and to wait for His appearing. . . . The question is no longer a question of exegesis with such clear light before us. It is simply a question of ethics with every believer. Have we the right moral disposition toward the truth, or will we still cling to error because we have unfortunately defended it too long; shall we act against the Truth or for the Truth? 'Unto the upright there ariseth light in darkness.'" (Quoted by A. Reese, p. 244)

### **IN ALL THESE THINGS**

Romans 8:37

God's promise is not freedom  
From trials in the race;  
But power to transcend them  
Through His sufficing grace.

Not rest instead of labour,  
But in the labour rest;  
Not calm instead of tempest,  
But calm when sore distressed.

Not light instead of darkness,  
Not joy instead of grief;  
But brightness in the midnight,  
And in the woe relief.

Not gain instead of losses,

Not ease instead of pain;  
But balm upon the anguish  
And losses bringing gain.

Not strength instead of weakness,  
Not smile instead of tears;  
Not peace instead of conflict,  
Not song instead of fears.

But weakness filled with power,  
And tears with radiance spread;  
And peace amid the battle  
And song e'er fears are fled.

Norman F. Douty  
"The Conqueror," Jan. 1941

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