

# LOOKING FOR THE SAVIOUR.

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“ For our citizenship is in heaven ; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ ” (Phil. iii. 20).

————— BY —————  
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## INTRODUCTION.

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*A clear view of the state of the people of God at the present time reveals many things that are calculated to cause sadness and discouragement. Worldliness, lack of brotherly love, divisions, contentions, and strife are conspicuous features of our truly deplorable condition. And along with this there exists an astounding lack of any sense of shame because of the spectacle we present in the eyes of an observant and jeering world. Surely, if ever there was a time for humiliation on the part of God's*

people, and for a turning to Him with sorrow of heart and shame of face, in the spirit of Daniel (Dan. ix. 3-20) that time is now.

In this scene of spiritual decline and indifference the one most hopeful sign that greets the eye is the manifest and increasing interest (among those who take any interest at all in "those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ") in the great subject of the Return of the Son of God to this earth, where once He was rejected and put to a shameful death, and where, during His long absence, He has been preached among all nations as the Saviour of repentant sinners.

Notwithstanding the disheartening facts mentioned in our opening paragraph, it is certainly true that never before, in the history of the Church of Christ, were there so many believers looking for the Saviour, and enquiring concerning the time and other details of His Coming Again. The number of books, pamphlets, and magazine articles on this subject, that have been issued within the last few

years, is really to be regarded as one of the spiritual phenomena of the time; and the fact that the great demand for publications treating of this theme shows no sign of abating is both remarkable and encouraging.

Indeed, so much has been written and printed, and so many excellent treatises, dealing with all phases of the subject, are already within reach of the people of God, that one feels he should have some compelling reason in adding another volume to the list. The writer, therefore, would state at the outset, that he has lately felt pressed to make a fresh investigation of the Scriptures that tell of the Lord's Return, with special reference to one phase of the subject which has been brought into prominence of late, namely, the question whether the Resurrection and Rapture of the saints will precede or follow the Great Tribulation.

So the author is able to give both a general reason, and also a specific reason for the appearance of this little volume.

*The general reason is that it seems well worth while to make every effort to maintain and stimulate a real heart-interest in the subject of the Coming Again of the Son of God from heaven; for in this direction lies the most hopeful quest for a remedy for the deplorable spiritual conditions noted above. Scripture and experience both testify that the doctrine of the Coming of the Lord to take His people out of the world to be with Himself, exerts an influence for godliness, holiness, watchfulness, and separation from the world and its things, more potent than that of any other. The great need of the times is for teaching of a practical sort, that is to say, teaching which influences the walk of the saints, rather than that which merely fills their heads with Scripture facts. One might be a perfect cyclopedia of biblical information, able to give a reading at any moment on any subject, and yet be steeped in worldliness, and be coldly indifferent to the sufferings and needs of the brethren. But*

*“every man that hath THIS HOPE in (set upon) Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.”*  
*In a word, the doctrine of Christ’s Coming Again is pre-eminently practical and wholesome.*

*The specific reason for the writing of these pages is as follows:*

*Several beloved and honoured brethren have lately pressed very earnestly upon the author’s attention certain publications written in support of the view that, according to the testimony of the prophetic Scriptures, the Great Tribulation and the career of Antichrist must occur, and run their course, before the Resurrection and Rapture of the saints. Out of sincere regard for the brethren referred to, and because of the importance of the point above stated, the present writer felt constrained to devote the time and effort necessary for a thorough examination of the subject. That examination has now been made. It was made with an open mind. In fact, so confident were the brethren referred*

*to of the correctness of their view, that the writer of these pages was quite prepared to find that they had proved their case, or at least had brought forward proofs and arguments of sufficient weight to raise a very substantial doubt as to there being any scriptural warrant for looking for the Saviour as an imminent, every day possibility.*

*Having now made this investigation, it seems desirable that the writer should set forth the conclusions at which he has arrived. In so doing, his aim is, not merely to make a contribution to the discussion of the disputed question, but also, and mainly, to set forth some positive points of doctrine which have come with considerable force to his mind while studying the Scriptures bearing upon the subject.*

*In the first part of this volume will be found an examination of the chief reasons that have been advanced in support of the post-tribulation view of the Rapture; and in the second part will be found some affirmative teaching on*

*the subject of the Lord's Return. The writer has not thought it necessary to repeat herein the arguments usually given in support of the pre-tribulation view of the Lord's Coming, and which have been accepted by very many as sufficient and satisfactory. Those arguments are accessible to all, having been clearly set forth in many publications, some of them being of quite recent date.*

*The writer would state at the outset that, in these days when the promise of the Lord's Return has been wholly lost sight of by the great mass of nominal christians, we can but feel very closely drawn to all who are truly looking for the Saviour, even though they be such as hold that there are unfulfilled prophetic events that must first occur. Therefore we can enter upon a discussion of that question with those brethren without feeling that we are engaging in controversy. It should be both enjoyable and profitable to discuss, with those who truly "look for Him," the details of His Coming. And both writer and*

*readers can join in the prayer that we may all be brought into agreement with the teaching of Scripture on this exceedingly interesting and important subject.*

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*Sturry, Kent.*

*December, 1913.*

# PART I.

## PART I.

### DIFFICULTY IN FIXING THE SEQUENCE OF PREDICTED EVENTS.

THOSE who have made any study of the prophetic portions of Scripture are aware of the difficulty that attends efforts at arranging predicted events in the order in which they are to occur. In regard to very many of the "things to come," God has seen fit to speak in such manner as to leave their sequence, and the intervals of time between them, in uncertainty. Of course there is, in this obscurity of prophecy, a wise and beneficent purpose. Nevertheless, it is perfectly legitimate to inquire and search diligently what, and what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ in the prophets did signify, when speaking beforehand concerning things that are to

occur hereafter, and in which we, the saints of God, are deeply concerned. In fact, it would seem that one purpose served by the obscurity referred to is to stimulate the more diligent searching of the Scriptures in regard to those matters.

In the special case before us two predicted events are involved, namely (1) the Resurrection and Rapture of saints, (2) the Great Tribulation.

The Scriptures do not anywhere state explicitly which of those events is to occur first, or what interval of time there will be between them. Those Scriptures which speak of the Tribulation make no mention of the Resurrection; and those which speak of the Resurrection make no mention of the Tribulation.

Some of the friends who contend for the post-tribulation view seek to take advantage of this by demanding the citation of a single Scripture which says that the Resurrection will take place before the Tribulation. There is indeed none which so states. For there is no single passage of Scripture which foretells both the Resurrection and the Tribulation. But this fact does not *settle* the question. It is

what *creates* the question. Manifestly, it is just as easy, and just as effective argumentatively, to demand a single passage of Scripture which says that the Tribulation will occur before the Resurrection for which the saints are told to look. In the absence of such an explicit statement of Scripture, one way or the other, it may be that the question does not admit of an absolute and indisputable settlement. Nevertheless, for all *practical* purposes, which are the *important* purposes, we believe the Scriptures do afford clear instruction and guidance to those who teach and minister the Word, what ought to be put before the saints of God as the event which they are to expect as imminent. If we are indeed able to find clear guidance in this matter, it will fully meet all the needs of God's waiting people, so far as their needs depend in any way upon the question under consideration.

Before setting forth what we believe to be the clear and decisive instructions of the Word of God on this subject, we deem it profitable to examine with some care the main points that have lately been urged in support of the view

that the Lord's Coming for His people is not to be expected until after the Great Tribulation. For the purpose of this examination we shall refer to a booklet by an aged and beloved minister of the Word, Mr. F. H. White, who contends earnestly for the post-tribulation view, but who does so in a spirit we all would do well to emulate when engaging in the discussion of disputed points.\*

Mr. White's pamphlet begins with a discussion and attempted refutation of the arguments and Scriptures usually advanced in support of the pre-tribulation view. It contains also an argument in support of the post-tribulation view, based mainly on 2 Thess. i. 7-10. The following are the chief points presented in the pamphlet.

I. A LENGTHENED PERIOD FORETOLD BETWEEN THE LORD'S ASCENSION AND HIS RETURN.

The Scriptures cited are Matt. xxiv. 6; Luke xix. 11, 12; Matt. xxv. 19. Those Scriptures, when viewed in the perspective of

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\* *The Saints' Rest and Rapture: When and for Whom.*  
By FRANK H. WHITE. Third Edition.

the intervening centuries, do indeed indicate that a lengthened period was to elapse before the Lord's Return. Yet the passages cited are so worded as not to forbid the expectation of the Lord's Return in the early christian centuries. The expression "lengthened period" is relative and indefinite; and, of course, the obscurity of those passages was intentional. It is enough to say of them that beyond question a lengthened period has now elapsed. The Scriptures referred to do not shed any light upon the question which event comes first, Rapture or Great Tribulation.

2. THE DISCIPLES WHOM THE LORD ADDRESSED IN MATT. XXIV. AND XXV. WERE "CHRISTIANS PROPER," REPRESENTING THE SAINTS OF THIS AGE.

From this premise Mr. White deduces the conclusion that the Great Tribulation is the prospect set before the saints of this age. This argument is much relied upon by our friend. It is repeated again in connection with comments upon Luke xxi. The argument seems to depend for its force upon the assumption that the Lord would not have

informed His disciples of future events in which the Church was not to have part. In other words, it is assumed that, because the Lord spoke of the Tribulation to representatives of the Church, therefore the Church must pass through the Tribulation. There is no doubt there will be multitudes saved during the Great Tribulation (Rev. vii. 9-14); and the only Scripture which those saints will have for their information and guidance are the same which we have now in our hands. It requires, therefore, no straining of the text to apply the "ye" and "you" of Matt. xxiv. 20, 23 to the Tribulation saints, regardless of what company of the redeemed they belong to. Those pronouns manifestly did not apply to the persons to whom Christ was speaking at the time, so they must apply to the people of God (to whatever company they may belong) who shall be on earth at the time of the predicted events, and within the area of their occurrence. There is nothing whatever in Matt. xxiv. to show whether or not there is to be a Rapture of saints before the Great Tribulation. Taking the evidence of the entire discourse as a whole, we think it distinctly

favours the view that the saints of this age should be always in expectation of the Lord's Coming, as an imminent possibility. Our reasons for so thinking will appear later on. But, confining ourselves at present to that part of the discourse to which our friends refer, we would call attention to the significant fact that the Lord makes no reference at all, in this prophetic utterance, to the Resurrection. Moreover, He distinctly tells His disciples what is to occur "*immediately after the tribulation of those days.*" That is precisely the point at which our friends locate the Resurrection. Is it not, then, a matter of considerable weight that the Lord Himself does *not* locate the Resurrection at this point, or locate there *any* event that is to happen to *His saints*, but speaks only of what will happen to "the tribes of the earth"? What *He* says is to occur immediately after the Tribulation is that "the sun shall 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; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and *they* shall see

the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory ” (verses 29, 30).

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that it was not the purpose of this passage to inform the saints of the present dispensation as to what lies before them at the end of the age. That remained a mystery until 1 Thess. was written. The Lord's explicit reference to what “ *they* ” shall see at the time specified (meaning the ungodly to whom He will come in judgment), and the omission to speak of the Resurrection of *the saints*, almost warrants the conclusion that the Resurrection, which is the event of supreme importance to the saints, will not occur then. Certainly it does warrant the conclusion that the prophecy was not given to teach when the Lord is to come for His saints.

Verse 31 says, “ And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” This concluding verse of the passage shows that there is to be a gathering of “ elect ” persons, (who are not resurrected saints brought forth

from their graves, but persons living on earth) after the Coming of the Son of Man in the clouds, and after the mourning of the tribes of the earth. Since all are agreed that the Resurrection and Rapture occur before the Appearing of the Son of Man, and the beginning of wrath on the wicked, it is evident that those living persons whom the angels gather "from the four winds" are a *distinct company*. The correspondence with Rev. vii., in which the Great Tribulation is also mentioned, is striking. In Rev. vi. we read of the darkening of the sun, the moon becoming as blood, and the stars falling from heaven, and the heaven departing as a scroll when rolled together (verses 12-14), precisely as in Matt. xxiv. 29. Then the great ones and small ones of the earth call upon the rocks to fall upon them and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb, corresponding to Matt. xxiv. 30. And then (Rev. vii. 1) we read, "And *after these things* I saw four angels standing on the *four corners of the earth*, holding *the four winds of the earth*, etc.;" and the passage tells that the four angels are restrained from hurting the earth until the servants of God should be sealed

in their foreheads. Further reference will be made to this chapter when we come to speak particularly of the Great Tribulation. At this point we are only examining Matt. xxiv. to see if it shows that the Resurrection of the saints takes place immediately after the Tribulation. We think that the passage to which our friends refer points rather the other way; for here we find in both Matt. xxiv. and Rev. vii. a great gathering of elect persons after judgment on the wicked has begun.

We fully agree that the disciples to whom the Lord was speaking in Matt. xxiv. and xxv. have a direct relation to the Church, the building of which was about to begin. They were the first members of the Church, and may therefore be properly regarded as representatives of all the members. But it is likewise true that those disciples were related also to Israel; for the Lord had told them that, in the regeneration, they should sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. xix. 28). Therefore, no reliable inference touching the sequence of coming events can be drawn from the assumption that the disciples were addressed as representatives of the Church.

We do not see that the question who they represented has any relevance to our inquiry; or why it should be assumed that the Lord addressed them in a representative capacity. A conclusion having no better support than the above inference would be of no value.

Verse 14 of Matt. xxiv. contains a statement which should not be ignored. The question which the Lord there answered had reference to "the end" of the age; and we suppose that no one would place the Resurrection later than the end of the age. As to this, the Lord says, "And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and *then* shall the end come." Whatever view may be taken of the precise significance of the word "end," the most unfavourable construction of this passage (from the standpoint of those who desire the immediate Coming of the Lord) would not postpone the Resurrection to a time beyond the day when the Gospel shall have been proclaimed "in all the world." If that has now been done, as we believe to be the case, then "the end" may come any day.

The words "in all the world" are not to be

subjected to such strict interpretation as to require that every town and village must hear the Gospel before the end can come. All would doubtless agree that the "witness" has been given unto all *nations*; and if so "the end," and hence necessarily the Resurrection also, are imminent. As helping to define the meaning of "in all the world" it should be noted that Paul could say, and did say before his departure from this scene, that the Gospel had come "in all the world" (Col. i. 5, 6). Hence, consistently with Matt. xxiv. 14, "the end" spoken of by the Lord might have come any day thereafter.

It is noticeable that the Lord did not say the end would come after the advent of Antichrist, or after the Great Tribulation, but connected it directly with the preaching of the Gospel. Manifestly therefore, Matt. xxiv. affords no comfort or support to the advocates of the post-tribulation view, even if we confine ourselves to those portions on which they rely. That great discourse, however, does contain a clear word, very pertinent to our inquiry, and to this we shall refer later.

3. CHRIST SPOKE TO HIS DISCIPLES OF EVENTS WHICH WERE TO OCCUR BEFORE HIS RETURN. PETER KNEW HE WAS TO DIE, AND PAUL LIKEWISE.

This is an argument that has been often used to disparage what is contemptuously spoken of as "the any moment theory." We, of course, fully agree that the predicted death of Peter and that of Paul must needs have occurred before the Lord's Return. But the conditions which beset those apostles made their death an event that might have occurred *any day*. Paul said he stood in jeopardy "every hour." So those predictions never were a bar to the Lord's imminent Return. And if they ever were, they certainly are not a bar now.

The question before us is, not what might have occurred before the New Testament Scriptures were written, but *what will occur in the light of what is revealed in those Scriptures*.

Our friends refer to, and rely much upon, the Lord's words to Peter, recorded in John xxi. 18, 19, "Signifying by what death he (Peter) should glorify God." It is generally

agreed that those words were not put down by John until *after Peter had departed*. How strange, then, that our friends should have overlooked the force of the succeeding verses of the narrative, which clearly are most pertinent to our inquiry. The Lord not only spoke to Peter about his (Peter's) death, but He added some words about John. Concerning the latter He said, "If I will that HE tarry TILL I COME, what is that to thee?" Surely, then, after Peter and Paul were taken away, the saints could point to the Lord's own words as ample warrant for expecting His Coming "at any moment," even during the lifetime of John. And if the Lord's Coming were imminent in John's lifetime, then, of course, there is the possibility of its occurrence "at any moment" subsequently.

#### 4. THE DAY OF THE LORD MUST BE PRECEDED BY THE ADVENT OF ANTICHRIST.

Mr. White says that the Resurrection is coincident with the exact commencement of the Day of the Lord, referred to in 2 Thess. i. But we do not find that the Scripture so states. Our friend makes some positive assertions at

this point, but no proofs are offered to sustain them. In the absence of proof, an argument is advanced which is based upon the fact that, in writing the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, the apostle did not offer them, in their great trials, the consolation that the Lord might come at any time to catch them away from the scene of their sufferings. Our friend *thinks* that the apostle, in writing to saints who were in such distressful circumstances, could not have failed to call their attention to the possibility of the Lord's Coming to deliver them, had there been any ground for offering them that comfort.

This is a very remarkable argument indeed, in view of the facts to which our brother himself calls attention. He points out that the apostle had just written his first letter to those very saints. Indeed, it had been written so short a time previous that, as Mr. White says, "The ink with which the apostle had written his first epistle to the Thessalonians was scarcely dry before he sat down to write them a second letter." And in that first letter he had made known to them, as a special revelation from the Lord, that very "comfort," in regard

to which our friend supposes the apostle was silent, and upon which supposed silence he bases his argument. Those distressed Thessalonian saints had at that very moment before them the cheering words of comfort and assurance, so freshly written that the ink was scarcely dry, "Then WE which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them (the sleeping saints who had been parted from them by death) in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air . . . Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Surely there was no need to repeat those words in the Second Epistle. Nor is it possible to mistake the meaning which was conveyed to the minds of those saints by the inspired words we have quoted. There is nothing uncertain or ambiguous about the words "WE which are alive and remain shall be caught up." They meant, and were intended to mean, that the saints then living might be still alive at the Lord's Coming.

Those words of comfort moreover, were followed by words of admonition, warning the saints to *watch* and be *sober*. Such warnings almost invariably accompany references

to the Lord's Return, showing that the doctrine is given in the Scripture for the express purpose of influencing the conduct of the saints, to the end that they might always live as they would wish to be found at His Coming.

Furthermore, in almost the last words of the First Epistle, the apostle utters the prayer, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and (may) *your* whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless *unto the Coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Again it is impossible to mistake the meaning of these words, or to err concerning the impression they made, and were intended to make, upon the minds of the saints.

It is appropriate to refer, at this point, to the words addressed by another inspired writer to saints who were in great distress. The fifth chapter of James begins with a sharp warning to the "rich men" who have "heaped treasure together *in the last days*" (lit. Gr.). Then he utters words of comfort for the "brethren" who have been caused to suffer by reason of the heartless and unscrupulous acquisitiveness of the "rich men." The brethren are exhorted to be patient, and to

endure their trials, "unto the Coming of the Lord"; and they are assured, moreover, that "the Coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

The meaning, and the intended effect, of this Scripture are unmistakeable. The inspired Apostle did not say or hint that the distressed saints must endure the still greater distresses of the Great Tribulation. And when uninspired men introduce that awful period between the suffering saints, and the "comfort of the Scripture," which has been graciously given for them in order that they "might have hope," they manifestly and radically change the meaning and effect of the Spirit's utterance. It is *no* encouragement to suffering saints to tell them that worse things are in store for them. There is all the difference in the world between looking for the Coming of the Lord, and looking for Antichrist and the Great Tribulation. The plain, undeniable fact is that where the Scriptures expressly and uniformly direct the attention and expectation of the tried saints to the Coming of the Lord, our friends who hold post-tribulation views, would direct their attention and expectation to the coming of Antichrist and the Tribulation.

We see, then, that our beloved brother has founded an argument upon a *supposed* omission of the Scriptures to point distressed saints to the prospect of the Lord's Coming for their deliverance; whereas in fact the Scriptures do the very thing which our brother supposes they omit to do.

5. TRIBULATION IS THE APPOINTED PORTION OF THE SAINTS.

The Lord said to His disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John xvi. 33).

Other Scriptures speak to the same effect; and the experience of the saints in all ages confirms it. Therefore, our friends argue, the saints should expect to go through the *Great* Tribulation. Does this conclusion follow from the premise? We say not so; but rather, if there be any pertinent conclusion to be drawn from the Scriptures cited, it would be the other way. If the Lord meant that the *Great* Tribulation was the portion of His saints, then there would needs be about three "great tribulations" every century—upwards of fifty to the present time—in order to meet the requirements of the case. But since there is to be

only *one* Great Tribulation it is apparent that the tribulation appointed to the saints must necessarily be of *another sort*, and that it is due to other causes than Antichrist.

It is confusion to speak (as many do, but not Mr. White) of "the Church going through the Tribulation," when the utmost possibility would be that a part of one generation of saints might pass through it.

6. "WHEN YE SEE THESE THINGS \* \* \*  
LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, FOR YOUR REDEMPTION DRAWETH NIGH" (Luke xxi. 28).

Mr. White directs attention to our Lord's utterance in Luke xxi., particularly verses 25-28, saying that the events there predicted are "the immediate precursors of the personal Coming of the Lord." We believe that our friend has seriously misread this passage, and we ask the reader's particular attention to it.

In the first place, Mr. White, in quoting the important verse 28, which he emphasizes by the use of capitals, omits from it words which have a *controlling influence* in determining the meaning of the passage. His version is as quoted at the head of this paragraph. We

have introduced stars to indicate the omitted words. Mr. White does not indicate the omission in any way. In the A.V., the verse reads, "And when ye see these things BEGIN TO COME TO PASS, then look up," etc. In the original text the word "beginning" stands in the position of emphasis. It reads thus: "But BEGINNING these things to come to pass, look ye up." We shall see presently the value of the omitted words.

Now let us attentively examine the passage. In verses 20-24 the Lord foretells the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred in the year 70. This event is not mentioned in either Matthew or Mark.

He then condenses the succeeding epoch of Jewish history into a few words, saying, "and they shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." This epoch of Jewish history has continued to the present time.

Then in verses 25, 26, 27, the Lord speaks of certain things which are to take place on the earth. Luke's account *does not mention the Great Tribulation*, which all agree will take

place in Judea; but it tells of *world-wide* political conditions. "Upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth."

The words "distress of nations" very aptly describe the great stress now existing in every nation of the world from China to Mexico, and which is specially acute in those nations known as the "Great Powers." In all of these are seen unprecedented labour troubles, rising tides of Socialism in various menacing forms, enormous and increasing burdens caused by the race of armaments, problems of taxation, land problems, industrial problems, increasing power of great monopolies, and the like. This is indeed "distress" of nations.

Moreover, the distress is accompanied by "perplexity"; for the statesmen and politicians can see *no way out* of these complicated difficulties. How many attempts have been made, for example, to find a way to curtail the excessive and ruinous increase in military and naval armaments? Every nation most heartily wishes to stop, yet all are impelled by some

overmastering influence to continue the mad race. The "Great Powers" have not the power to cease from a course that points to their own ruin.

The reference to the sea and waves roaring is doubtless a figurative description of the tumultuous uprisings of masses of peoples.

Here, then, is the vivid picture of a world-wide state of political affairs, and one which certainly corresponds in a marvellous way with the now existing condition of the nations of the world. We grant that the present state of things admits of intensification; and that it might be protracted for a period of years. Nevertheless, the important question for us is this: Are we warranted, as we survey the present state of the nations, in drawing the conclusion that we are already at the "*beginning*" of those things whereof the Saviour spoke in this prophecy? If so, WHAT NEXT? The answer comes in the Lord's own words, "Then look *up*, lift *up* your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh."

Will any one contend that these words have the same meaning for us as if the Lord had said, "When these things begin to come to

pass, then look *out*, beware, for Antichrist and the Great Tribulation draw nigh"? What ever others may think about it, I can only say that the meaning which the Lord's words convey to my mind are in direct contrast and contradiction to that which Mr. White gives as the effect and meaning of this passage.

But the full force of the Scripture has not yet been brought out. In order to obtain it we must notice the contrast between the pronoun "they" in verse 27, and "ye" in verse 28; and also must notice that verse 28 should begin with "but," not "and." Thus what the Lord tells us is that "then," i.e., *after* all the predicted things have fully taken place, "shall **THEY** see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." We may pause here to ask, Would the Lord have said "*they* shall see" if that was the occasion when *His own saints* should get their first sight of Him?

This, we think, could not be. If that were the time when He is to appear for the first time to His waiting people, He could hardly suppress that transcendently important fact and speak only of His Appearing to the ungodly. Moreover, the next verse says, by way

of contrast, " *But*, when those things *begin* to come to pass " (i.e., in contrast to after they are all finished) "*then* look ye up, and lift up your heads, for *your redemption* draweth nigh."

So the passage presents this contrast : THEY shall see the SON OF MAN coming for judgment, AFTER the predicted things have all happened ; whereas (" but ") WE are to look up for OUR REDEMPTION, when the predicted things BEGIN to come to pass.

The contrasted terms may be thus exhibited :

They	Ye
After the events	At the beginning
Son of Man seen coming for judgment.	Your redemption ap- proaching.

It should be noted that from verse 21 to 27 inclusive the prophecy has to do *entirely with the ungodly*. In its entirety it deals with them only. Having completed the prediction, the Lord adds the words, " But, beginning these things to come to pass, look ye up, and lift up your heads because draws near your redemption " (lit. Greek). This added clause, having to do solely with His own people, is quite distinct from what precedes.

The passage, moreover, presents the characteristic invariably found in those Scriptures which speak of the Lord's Coming for His saints, namely that there *is no mention of the Great Tribulation.*

It seems to us that these words of our Lord give full warrant to His people to be looking up for His Coming, as a matter of daily expectation and possibility, from the very *beginning* of the predicted events.

We do not wish to force the meaning of the passage in any way, and therefore concede fully that the Lord's words do not bind Him to come at any particular stage in the predicted events. Just as in Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii., and Luke xii., He left it open to Himself to come in any "watch" of the night, or at any "hour"; so here He leaves the actual time of His Coming unannounced.

We are quite aware that our friends, who contend for the post-tribulation Coming, may say that the passage might only mean that the *beginning* of the described conditions of the nations is the signal for us to look up in expectation of His Coming at the *end* of the predicted state of things. This, however, we could

not concede, for it would be inconsistent with the contrast indicated by the word "but," and with the change of pronouns. But even so, the *essential conclusion remains unimpaired*; for no one can possibly say that, if the Lord should descend from heaven to the air to raise the dead and catch away the living saints at "any moment" after the *beginning* of "those things," it would not be in *precise accordance* with the terms of the prophecy. That is the essence of the whole matter; for the utmost we contend for is that no unfulfilled prophecy now stands between us and the possibility of the Resurrection and Rapture.

And furthermore, it is permissible for us to say that our friends, who introduce into the terms of this prophecy Antichrist and the Tribulation, and place them between the *beginning* of the things spoken of by the Lord and the promised "redemption," do thereby make a very large addition to the Lord's prophecy, and a very obvious and very serious alteration in the meaning of His words, and in their effect upon the hearts of His people.

It is worth while in this connection to point out a difference between the account recorded

by Luke and that of Matthew. Luke, who makes no mention of the Tribulation, tells of the coming of our Redemption, and calls special attention to the *beginning* of the foretold events, saying nothing of "the end." On the other hand, Matthew, who mentions the Tribulation, says nothing about the Redemption of the saints, and nothing about the beginning, but calls attention to "the end," and lays stress upon it. These differences, though seemingly slight, are not without interest and importance in connection with our enquiry.

We conclude, therefore, that Luke xxi., as to the portion cited by our brother, does not support his contention, but quite the reverse.

7. "TO YOU WHO ARE TROUBLED, REST WITH US" (2 Thess. i. 7).

This Scripture seems to be the main support of our friend's argument. Will it bear the weight of his contention? The passage reads:

"It is a righteous thing with God to recompense *tribulation* to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, *rest* with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty

angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The first thing that strikes us, in reading this passage, is that it expressly awards “tribulation” to be ungodly, not to the saints; while to the latter it awards “rest.” So that, at first glance at least, it is not a Scripture that could be used to support the view that the Great Tribulation is apportioned to the saints. Nor, on closer examination, do we find in it a hint or suggestion that the present troubles of the saints were to be followed by the severer troubles and unspeakable horrors of the Great Tribulation. On the contrary, what is put before the tried saints is the distinct prospect of “rest.”

But our friend says that the promised “rest” will be given “*when* the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven”; and this he takes to mean that the rest from sufferings will begin at, and not before, the *revealing* of the Lord Jesus with His mighty angels in flaming fire. It all turns upon the precise force of the word “when.” The support which our friend finds for his argument depends entirely on holding

that the word "when" strictly defines the *beginning* of the saints' release from their trials, and compels us to conclude that those trials will continue up to the very moment of the revealing of the Lord in flaming fire, which will not be until after the Great Tribulation.

But does the word "when" necessarily have this meaning? Manifestly not. Moreover, it is quite clear, upon study of the passage, that its purpose is not at all to state when the Rapture, spoken of in the first letter, will occur. We shall see later on that the purpose of the passage is to state the "recompense" which is to be awarded to those who were troubling the saints, and also the recompense which is to be awarded to the saints themselves. The period of *recompense* is the *kingdom period*, which is to be inaugurated "when the Lord shall be revealed." Verse 5 says that the endurance by the saints of persecutions and tribulations was "a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of *the kingdom of God* for which ye also suffer."

Inasmuch as the "kingdom" is expressly the subject of the passage, and as that will be the period of "recompense," both for wrong-

doers and for those who have suffered by their wrong-doings, the expression “ *when* the Lord Jesus shall be revealed ” aptly and accurately conveys the thought of an era of time when both classes will be in the condition justly due to them.

What is promised to the saints is simply that the troubled ones shall be in the enjoyment of “ rest ” at the same time when “ tribulation ” is the portion of those who were troubling them. In order to the fulfilment of this promise it is not at all necessary that the trials of the distressed saints should continue up to the very time when the tribulation of the troublers begins. It would be equally fulfilled if the relief of the saints should begin—as by their Rapture, foretold in the First Epistle—weeks, or months, or years previously.

It is easy to test the question whether the word “when” must needs be given the meaning required by our friend for the purpose of supporting his argument. If so, then it would follow that *those very saints to whom the Epistle was addressed* could have no relief from their earthly persecutions until the Lord should be revealed from heaven. But in fact

they have had release many centuries ago; and the Lord has not yet been revealed.

On the other hand, the recompense promised them has *not yet* been awarded them. That they will receive "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven."

Therefore, the right interpretation of the passage seems to us to be free from doubt. But, inasmuch as this Scripture is of great importance, and has been seriously taken by not a few to sustain the post-tribulation view of the Rapture, it will repay us to examine it further.

The following points are worthy of notice.

(a). In verse 10 the period to which the passage refers is defined by the words, "When He shall come to be glorified." It has been pointed out that the original word is "when He *shall have* come"; and Mr. White admits this to be correct rendering. It shows that the Coming precedes the foretold conditions.

(b). Our brother admits, as of course he must, that the Rapture will necessarily take place *before* the Lord "shall be revealed in flaming fire"; because when He shall be thus revealed, the saints shall also be revealed *with*

*Him.* But our brother says the interval between the Rapture and the Revealing will not be a "long interval," but only part of a day. But if it is necessary to insist upon such strict construction of the word "when," no interval, short or long, would be admissible. If any interval at all is introduced between the Rapture and the Revealing, then the foundation of the argument is destroyed. A "short" interval is just as effective for this as a "long" one. If the fact of an interval be granted, as it must be, and is, then there is nothing whatever to show whether its duration is "short" or "long," according to God's measure of time. His "little while" often seems to us to be a long time. For example, Paul says, speaking of his own unparalleled sufferings, "for our light affliction, which is *but for a moment*" (2 Cor. iv. 17).

(c). It is very significant that, in 2 Thess., the apostle speaks, not of the *Rapture* of which he had spoken in his first letter (and which is the subject of our present inquiry), but of the *rest* which the saints are to enjoy when the Lord is revealed and the Kingdom set up. We are bound to take note of the fact that the

apostle does not speak here of the Rapture, but introduces a different subject. If he had meant to say that the *Rapture*, of which he had just written, would occur simultaneously with the revealing of the Lord in flaming fire, he would not have used the language we find in this passage.

In seeking the reason for this change of subject, it is pertinent to observe that the Rapture and Resurrection are *instantaneous events*. We shall be changed *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye* (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52). On the contrary, the "rest" is a *condition of existence*, extending over a period of time, like the Tribulation, and the trouble, spoken of in the same connection.

Again, the apostle is speaking in 1 Thess. iv. of only *one* class of persons, the saints. Before *them* he puts the prospect of Resurrection and Rapture; and he does so "by the Word of the Lord."

But in 2 Thess. i. he is speaking of *two* classes of persons, (1) the saints who were being troubled, and (2) those who were troubling them. And he now tells of the change that will take place in the condition of the *two*

*classes* when the Lord shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance, etc. When *that* takes place, the apostle tells us, the state of *both* the two classes will be changed. The oppressors will thereafter undergo "tribulation," whereas the saints will be at the same time in the enjoyment of "rest."

Combining the statements contained in the two passages (1 Thess. iv., and 2 Thess. i.), we learn that the Lord Himself will *descend* into the air with a shout, with the Voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God—nothing said about His mighty angels, or flaming fire, or vengeance on the wicked—; and at *that* time the dead in Christ will rise, and they, with the living ones, be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Subsequently, after an interval whose duration is not stated, the Lord shall be *revealed*, with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance, etc.—nothing said about resurrection or rapture—and thereafter will be a period of "tribulation" for the troublers of the saints, and of "rest" for the saints themselves.

The change in the status of *both* the classes

named in the passage could not be located at the time of the Lord's descent into the air, for the obvious reason that, at that time, *only* the saints will be affected.

Furthermore, the passage in 2 Thess. i. refers expressly to the inauguration of the *Kingdom of God*—"that ye may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God for which ye also suffer" (ver. 5). *Sufferings* are to be compensated in the *kingdom*. "If we *suffer*, we shall also *reign* with Him" (2 Tim. ii. 12).

The purpose, therefore, of the passage is to point to the period when the sufferings which the saints were enduring at that time shall be *compensated*. That period (the kingdom) begins at the Revealing, not at the Rapture. Thus the exactitude of Scripture appears. The Resurrection and Rapture are wholly of grace; whereas the Kingdom always is mentioned in connection with rewards for faithfulness, obedience, or endurance of sufferings for Christ's sake.

We regard it, therefore, as perfectly clear that the object of this passage is not to make known the point of time when the Resurrection and Rapture will occur, and that, on the

contrary, such revelation is entirely foreign to its purpose. Hence, we find in 2 Thess. i. no information as to whether or not the Rapture precedes the Great Tribulation; but, so far as the passage sheds any light at all upon that question, it confirms the view that the Great Tribulation is not the predicted portion of the saints, and that the latter will be caught up before it takes place.

8. THE "HOPE" OF THE CHURCH IS THE APPEARING (REVELATION) OF CHRIST IN MANIFESTED GLORY—NOT THE RAPTURE OF THE SAINTS.

In the well-known passage, Titus ii. 13, we read that the grace of God teaches us how to live in this present age, "looking for that Blessed Hope, and the *appearing of the glory* of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ." Other Scriptures such as 1 Cor. i. 7; 1 Tim. vi. 14; Col. iii. 4; 1 Pet. i. 13; 1 Pet. iv. 13, direct the expectations of the saints to the time of the Revealing of the glory of the Lord, rather than to the Resurrection and Rapture of the saints.

Mr. White asks why this is so; and appar-

ently to his mind the explanation is that the Rapture of the saints and the Revealing of the Lord in glory, are simultaneous. But we cannot follow him in this deduction. The above cited Scriptures do not mention either the Rapture or the Tribulation. Hence it is not to be expected that we shall find in them an answer to the inquiry, which event comes first in point of time.

On the other hand, we may readily discover excellent and weighty reasons why the foregoing and other Scriptures point to the period of the manifested glory of the Lord, and of His saints with Him, as the time when the "Hope" of the believer will be fully realized, and the promises of God completely fulfilled. The Resurrection and catching up of the saints, tremendously important as those events are, are but preliminaries to the great purpose of God for the glory of His beloved Son. Until His glory shall have been displayed in the very scene of His humiliation and shameful Death on the Cross, until the kingdoms of this world shall have become the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ, until all iniquity shall have been banished, and all enemies put

down, until every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord, the purpose of the Father will yet await completion. If we think only of ourselves, then to be caught up from the place of trial to meet the Lord in the air fills about as much of expectation as our hearts will hold. But God's purpose is not chiefly for us, but for Himself. It has reference primarily not to our salvation, but to the glory of His Son. And even the subordinate place which the saints have in the mighty purpose of God, is not merely their deliverance from affliction, but the bringing of "many sons *unto glory*"; not merely the catching away of suffering saints from the earth, but the *manifestation* of the sons of God, and the deliverance of groaning creation itself from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of *the glory* of the children of God.

Thus the Scriptures reveal abundant reason why the period of Christ's manifested glory is put before the saints as the consummation of their Hope.

## PART II.

## PART II.

WE have now completed our examination of the reasons advanced by Mr. White in support of the post-tribulation view. After carefully weighing those reasons, we find that they fall far short of what would be required to carry conviction to the unbiassed mind; and we find further that the very Scriptures, cited to support that view, tend rather to refute it.

We come now to the affirmative side of the discussion, and would inquire if there be any reasons fairly deducible from the Scriptures for expecting the Lord to raise up the sleeping saints and catch them up with the living ones into the air, before the occurrence of the Great Tribulation; or, in other words, as an everyday possibility.

## THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST.

The teaching of Scripture concerning the Judgment seat of Christ, before which every saint must stand to give an account of himself, and to receive of the deeds done in the body, whether "good or bad," has a direct bearing on our subject. We refer to it at this point because it connects closely with the last topic discussed above. For it furnishes another and strong reason why the Scriptures so often direct the thoughts of the saints to the time of the manifested glory of the Lord. The reason is that, at *that* time, as we understand the Scriptures, the session at the judgment seat will have been concluded.

In Rom. xiv. 10, 12 we find these important words: "But why dost thou *judge* thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the *Judgment seat of Christ*. . . . So then, *every one of us* shall give account of himself to God."

Again it is written: "For we must all appear before the *Judgment seat of Christ*;

that *every one* may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad ” (2 Cor. v. 10).

This session at the judgment seat, which will be an affair of great magnitude and solemnity, must necessarily take place *after* the Resurrection, for it is expressly said that “ we shall *all* stand,” “ we must *all* appear ” before Christ’s Judgment seat. Hence “ all ” must be raised in order to appear there. The apostles themselves must be judged as to their acts, words, and works; for Paul says “ *We* shall stand,” “ every one *of us* shall give account of himself.”

The trial of the believer’s works by fire, described in 1 Cor. iii., is spoken primarily in regard to the works of the apostles. “ *Every man’s work* shall be made manifest; for *the day* will declare it ” (ver. 13). This verse definitely locates the judgment of the works and conduct of saints in “ the day.” The next chapter (1 Cor. iv. 1-5) is even more definite. In it Paul declares that, as a servant of Christ and steward of the mysteries of God, he is not to be judged by the Corinthian saints, “ or of

man's judgment" (literally "man's day," which is this present age). "But," he says, "He that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore, judge nothing before the time, *until the Lord come*" (lit. *shall have come*).

This Scripture, therefore, definitely places the judgment of saints *after* the Lord shall have come to raise the dead and change the living.

There are, moreover, strong reasons for believing that this solemn session at Christ's Judgment seat will take place *before* the Appearing or Revealing of the Lord with His glorified saints.

In the first place, it is of some importance that the word for "come" in 1 Cor. iv. 5 is not one of the Greek words that signify *revealing*, or *manifestation*, or *unveiling*. It is (and this is significant in our opinion) the same word used in 1 Cor. xi. 26, "Ye do show the Lord's Death *till He come*." The Scripture does not say, Ye shall show the Lord's Death till He be *revealed*. Had it said that, it would show that the Church would be commemorating the Lord's Death up to the very

time of His Revealing. Whereas the use of the word "come" points to an earlier time. The word employed in both these passages is just that word which would be used if the saints of this dispensation were to be removed from earth to be with the Lord before His Revealing. Again, the word used in 1 Cor. iv. 5, telling when the judgment of saints will take place, is not the word used in 2 Thess. i. 7 to describe the Revealing of the Lord in judgment on the wicked. Hence, so far as this Scripture (1 Cor. iv. 5) speaks to the point (and in our opinion it speaks very much to the point), it declares that the judgment of the saints will be after the *Coming* of the Lord, but before the *Revealing*.

Again, in 1 Pet. iv. 17 occurs this statement: "For the time (is come)\* that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first *begin* at us, what shall the END be of *them that obey not the Gospel of God?*" This verse connects closely with 1 Thess. i. 7, 8, which contains the answer to Peter's question; for there

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\* The words "is come" are supplied by the translators.

we learn what shall be "the end" of them "that obey not the Gospel." We have seen that the judgment of them that obey not the Gospel will take place "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven." But the passage in 1 Pet. iv. 17 expressly says the judgment of the house of God precedes the judgment of them that obey not the Gospel. Hence it precedes the Revealing of the Lord Jesus in flaming fire.

In fact, it is impossible to conceive of any other time than the interval between the Rapture of the saints and their Appearing with the Lord in glory, when the matters that await judgment between the Lord and His people, and between saint and saint, could be disposed of judicially.

That assize at Christ's Judgment seat must necessarily be on a stupendous scale; for the words and acts of the saints, including all sins which have not been brought to self-judgment, will be reviewed and appropriately recompensed. And let it not be forgotten that there is not only "the recompense of reward" for faithfulness and obedience, which Moses had

in view (Heb. ix. 26), but also that there is "a just recompense of reward" for "every transgression and disobedience" (Heb. ii. 2, 3). For the saints are, *every one*, to receive "the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether *good or bad.*"

We know it is quite common, and alas! exceedingly popular, in this lax and easy-going day, either to ignore, or actually to set aside, this solemn and salutary warning concerning the Judgment seat of Christ. Saints are quite willing to hear about receiving recompense for the things done in the body that are "good"; but are disposed to close their ears to the warning that they are to receive equally for the deeds that are "bad." But there stand the words of God, and we dare not set them aside, or water down their very clear meaning. Who can say to what extent the present low spiritual condition of the saints is due to the prevailing tendency, on the part of those who assume to teach and instruct them, to disregard or blunt the edge of the sharp warnings of Scripture, of which there are many, or to explain them away, or to assign them to others

than the children of God, for whose benefit they are given ?

Manifestly the proceedings at Christ's Judgment seat will require much time ; and we may be sure that the Lord will not hurry through an affair of such solemnity and importance. All His acts are done deliberately and impressively. Hence there must needs be a long interval between the Rapture and the Appearing ; and we find in the Scriptures we have examined, ample warrant for concluding that this interval will coincide with the career of Antichrist and the Great Tribulation on earth.

It is safe to assume that the session of the judgment seat will be a private affair, so far as the world is concerned ; for, of course, the conduct of the saints would not be investigated in the presence of the ungodly. It is also to be inferred that, when the saints appear with Christ in glory, each will have been assigned to the position he is to occupy in the Kingdom. Hence the need of a long period of time for the Lord apart with His saints,

before He comes to earth with them in manifested glory.

ANALOGY TO FIRST COMING OF CHRIST.

The Old Testament prophecies concerning the Coming of Christ exhibit the same peculiarity as those of the New Testament, in that they foretell many distinct events, but do not usually state the order of their occurrence, or the length of the interval between them.

The students of Old Testament prophecy who sought to fix the time of the Coming of the expected King would have pondered such passages for example, as Zech. ix. 9: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold THY KING COMETH UNTO THEE. He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass." Also Isa. ix. 6, 7; xxxii. 1; Psa. xlv. 1-7, etc. And in the attempt to fix the order of His Coming in relation to other predicted events they would, of course, have noted particularly Isa. xl. 3: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilder-

ness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord ”; and Mal. iii. 1 : “ Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way *before* Me; and the Lord Whom ye seek shall *suddenly come to His Temple* ”; and Mal. iv. 5 : “ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, *before the coming* of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.”

From these prophecies the expositor might have insisted, and with a show of reason, that the Lord could not “ come ” to His Temple until the messenger should first appear to prepare the way “ before ” Him; and that they who looked for Him to appear before the predicted messenger were indulging a vain expectation.

Yet the fact is that the Lord came to His Temple *thirty years* before the predicted messenger appeared to announce Him; and He was seen by Simeon (the “ hearer ”) who was led by the Holy Spirit, by Anna, who waited upon the Lord in the Temple, by the shepherds who were keeping their flocks by night, and by the wise men from the East, who saw His star, and hence must have been watching

in the night; and, moreover, His Coming was made known "*to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem*" (Luke ii. 38).

No one will pretend that there is anything like such strong proof for the post-tribulation Coming of the Lord for the waiting saints, as the Old Testament afforded to those who might have contended that the "Coming" of Christ could not be until after the "predicted signs," particularly the advent of the forerunner. Hence those saints who are now seeking to obey the Lord's injunction to look up, and lift up their heads, believing that the season for expecting the promised "redemption" has arrived, would be very unwise to abate that expectation through giving heed to the doctrine that the Lord cannot come to take them to Himself until Antichrist shall have appeared, and the Great Tribulation shall have run its dreadful course.

The opening chapters of Luke's Gospel show us a little company of obscure people who were "looking for redemption in Israel," and some others who were watching in the night. The closing chapters point to another

company who likewise will be watching in the night, and who will give seasonable heed to the Lord's exhortation, looking up, and lifting up their heads, in confident expectation that *their* "redemption draweth nigh." Surely the resemblance here pointed out is not a mere coincidence; and surely it contains a lesson for those who are able to receive it.

#### THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

It is desirable, for the purposes of our inquiry, to refer to the several passages which expressly mention the Great Tribulation. The first clear reference to that period of unparalleled trial is found in Jer. xxx. 4-9. We there read of it, "Alas! for that day is GREAT, so that there is NONE LIKE IT; it is even the *time of Jacob's Trouble*; but HE shall be saved out of it."

From this we learn that the Great Tribulation, so "great" that there is "none like it" (cf. the Lord's words in Matt. xxiv. 21, "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever

shall be ”), is a part of the *national history of apostate Israel*, and is the culmination of God’s *punitive dealings* with that people for its rebellion and apostasy.\*

Again in Daniel xii. 1 we read, “And there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation (i.e., a nation of Israel) even to that same time: and at that time THY PEOPLE shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the Book.” This was part of a prophecy given to Daniel by the mighty angel who said, “Now I am come to make thee understand what shall BEFALL THY PEOPLE in the latter days” (Dan. x. 14).

We have, then, the most solid reasons for saying that the Great Tribulation is the portion of the unconverted apostate nation, Israel, and has no relation whatever to the Church of Christ. It is expressly for those who departed from the Lord *before His First Coming*, and by whom He was despised and rejected *at His Coming*. Most assuredly it is not for those who received Him, believed

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\* Mr. White admits that the saints will not have part in any of God’s *punitive* dealings with the world.

on His Name, and were made members of His own Body. What conceivable reason could there be why those who accept Christ when preached to them, should share the punishment of those who despised and rejected Him?

There is positively no sounder reason for holding that the Church is to partake of the Great Tribulation than for holding that it is to partake of the wrath of the Lamb.

The fact that the Lord mentions the Tribulation in speaking to His own disciples, and that the latter formed subsequently the nucleus of the Church of Christ, affords not the slightest ground for saying that the Church must experience the Tribulation. In Luke xxi. 24 the Lord, speaking also to *His own disciples*, stated that the Israelites should be led away captive into all nations. If our friend's argument were valid, it would equally well prove that the Church was to partake of that captivity among the nations.

The reference to the Great Tribulation in Matt. xxiv. has been sufficiently noticed, and its bearing upon our inquiry pointed out. We

therefore need only call attention to the further fact that the Lord, in speaking of the Great Tribulation, said nothing to broaden the scope of that period of judgment, so as to include in it others than Israelites, or to extend its area beyond the land of Judea. On the contrary, the words "then let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains" fix the locality of the event.

Finally, the Great Tribulation is named in Rev. vii. 14. The literal rendering of that verse is "these are they who come out of the Tribulation, the great one." This chapter throws light on our subject.

It is a significant fact that, in the forefront of the chapter of this prophecy which speaks of the Great Tribulation, there are presented to view the entire Twelve Tribes of Israel. So far as the Book of Revelation discloses the state of things on earth at the approaching end times, the Church disappears entirely from view after chapter iii. Then, at chapter vii., Israel appears again on the scene; all the Tribes being put before us as composing one nation, for the first time since the rebellion of

## *LOOKING FOR THE SAVIOUR.*

Jeroboam. And this is the introduction to the subject of the Great Tribulation. The disappearance from view of the Church and Churches, and the re-appearance under the Eye and Hand of God of all the Tribes of Israel, just prior to the Great Tribulation, furnishes another reason, and to our mind a weighty one, for concluding that the Tribulation is the portion of Israel, as distinct from the Church.

After the sealing of 12,000 out of each of the Tribes of the children of Israel, a great multitude is seen standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white garments, and having palm-branches, the emblems of victory, in their hands (ver. 9).

John, an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, is not one of that company, and does not recognize them, but needs to be told who they are. The elder, who also is not one of them, informs him that these are they who came out of the Great Tribulation.

From this it appears that the multitude who shall be saved out of the Great Tribulation constitute a distinct company, separate from all other companies of saved human beings.

Moreover, the recorded conversation between John and the elder indicates quite clearly, in our opinion, that this multitude is not the Church.

Verse 9 gives some support to the view that the Great Tribulation will extend over all the earth, for it says that the saved multitude was "out of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues." This, however, is not conclusive. The multitude may be composed entirely of Israelites, for they will have been gathered out of all nations and lands. A similar expression is found in other Scriptures, speaking of Israel. For example, "Whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy; and gathered them out of the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south" (Psa. cvii. 2, 3). On the Day of Pentecost there were at Jerusalem, "Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven" (Acts ii. 5). But whether or not this saved multitude is composed only of Israelites, it seems quite clear that it is distinct from the Church.

Furthermore, at a time considerably anterior

to the appearance of the tribulation-saints, which occurs after the sixth seal (which seal marks the beginning of the "great day of wrath"), there is seen in heaven a redeemed company, the four-and-twenty elders, seated around the Lamb, "clothed in white raiment," and "having on their heads crowns of gold." We are not disposed to insist that those "elders" represent the Church. That point is too much disputed to permit the drawing of inferences from it. But after making all reasonable allowances for uncertainties of the text and its interpretation, it seems clear that these elders are redeemed human beings; for they have the white garments significant of the righteousness of the saints, and they sing the song of redemption. Since these are in heaven long before the Great Tribulation begins (even before the opening of the first seal) there must have been a Resurrection and Rapture before the Tribulation.

#### THE PROSPECT PLACED BEFORE THE SAINTS.

As we have seen, the Scriptures distinctly

announce the Great Tribulation as the culminating judgment appointed for apostate Israel. It further appears that Israel will plunge into it in the ignorance of unbelief. They at least do not know what is in store for them. The only ones who know of the coming of the Great Tribulation are the few saints who take sufficient interest in the Return of the Lord Jesus to search the Scriptures for light upon that event. So that, if the post-tribulation view be correct, only those saints who love the Lord's Appearing have before them the known prospect and bitter anticipation of undergoing the judgment expressly pronounced upon Israel for its apostasy.

But the Scriptures do not so speak. On the contrary, they clearly and definitely put before the saints of God the prospect of the resurrection of the dead in Christ incorruptible, the changing of the living, and the catching away of both to meet the Lord in the air, without the intervention of any definite period of tribulation. In the Scriptures there is no confusion in regard to the two outlooks, that of unbelieving Israel toward the Great Tribula-

tion, and that of the saints towards the Coming of Christ. Those several prospects are as different in character as are the two classes of human beings to which they respectively pertain; one class having rejected Christ, the other being composed of those who believe on Him and belong to Him. According to the Scripture there is no more likelihood of the participation of the saints in the prospect of apostate Israel, than of participation by apostate Israel in the prospect of the Church. How is it possible to confuse two things so radically distinct as these? It amounts practically to saying that, in the exceedingly important matter of the immediate prospect which the Word of God puts before mankind, it matters not at all whether men accept Christ, or reject Him.

The very fact that the Tribulation is the era of the rule of Antichrist, and that its horrors are the fruit of his rule, would seem to forbid the thought that they who are Christ's are to partake of it.

The Lord said to the Jews, "I am come in My Father's Name, and ye receive Me not:

if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John v. 43). That "other" is Antichrist. And the apostle Peter said: "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you" (Acts iii. 14). The fruit of that choice will be tasted in the reign of Antichrist. By whom? Surely by those who made that choice. "Say to the righteous that it shall be well with him, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe to the wicked! it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands" (what his own hands have matured) "shall be given him" (Isa. iii. 10, 11).

It seems, therefore, a strange confusion to assign to those who have received the Christ of God by faith the consequences specially visited upon those who rejected Him, which consequences flow directly from their rejection.

### THE IMMEDIATE PROSPECT OF THE SAINTS.

Numerous passages of Scripture testify concerning that which is put before the saints as

their *immediate* prospect. We lay stress upon the word "immediate" because it has been frequently said that one may be none the less sincerely looking for and expecting the Coming of the Lord, because he expects the Great Tribulation to come first. But to that we must reply that the character and duration of the Great Tribulation are such that no human being could look calmly through and beyond it to a joyful expectation of the Lord's Appearing. Made as we are, if Antichrist and the Great Tribulation be our immediate prospect, then those fearful events must necessarily occupy us, practically to the exclusion of "the Blessed Hope."

It has even been said that the waiting for Christ to come after the Tribulation is like waiting for a loved one to arrive by train, and meanwhile observing the semaphore signal which must first fall. Such an one (so runs the argument) is none the less eagerly expecting the coming one because he knows he cannot come until after the signal falls. But is there any likeness at all between the two cases?

An illustration, to be effective, should resemble the thing illustrated. The dropping of a semaphore signal is a very simple affair; but what would be the state of mind of the waiting one if he knew that, before the expected arrival, he must pass through years of horrors of such character and magnitude that the world has never seen the like, and never will again? If that were his *immediate* prospect, how much room would there be in his heart for anticipated enjoyment of the loved one's remote arrival? Could one speak lightly of the Great Tribulation if he had an idea of what it will be to those who have to endure its awful experiences?

When we recall the unspeakable cruelties inflicted by the Romans upon the early Church, and the awful atrocities of the Inquisition; and when we remember that the Great Tribulation will exceed those periods of horror, we can but wonder that the Great Tribulation should be likened to the mere dropping of a semaphore signal. Thankful we should be that the Lord has given us some tokens to herald the "times and seasons" of His Com-

ing; and deeply thankful, that the Great Tribulation is not one of them.

So the important practical question is, What does the Word of God put before the saints as their *immediate* prospect? The answer to *this* question is involved in no doubt or uncertainty.

Among the Scriptures that bear upon this question are the very Scriptures, Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii., and Luke xii. and xxi., which are cited by those who hold the post-tribulation view. We call attention to the fact that, in the very discourse in which the Lord foretells the coming of the Great Tribulation in the land of Judea, He bids His own disciples to *watch*—not for the Tribulation, but—for His own Coming. “Watch, therefore: for ye know not what hour *your Lord doth come*” (ver. 42). This is in accordance with all Scripture in placing the Lord’s Coming before the minds of the saints as something for which they are to be ever watching.

The corresponding words in Luke’s Gospel are, “Watch ye, therefore, and pray *at every*

*season* " (Luke xxi. 36, R.V.). These words are addressed to the common understanding of common people; and their meaning and purpose are transparently clear.

Furthermore, in the passage in Matthew, the Lord says: " But know this that if the good man of the house had known *in what watch* the thief would come, he would have watched. . . . Therefore, be ye also ready, for in such *an hour* as ye think not the Son of Man cometh " (verses 43, 44).

These words give, and plainly were intended to give, the impression that, as a thief might come at *any hour of the night*, without any preliminary warnings of his coming, so the Lord might come for His saints at any hour of the night of His absence, without conspicuous signs of His Advent. We say " conspicuous " signs, for there is a distinct intimation that those who " watch " will have some preliminary indications of His Coming; just as a watchful person in the house might hear the faint sounds of the thief's preparations to enter. It is pertinent to observe that, in speak-

ing to His own disciples of His Coming for them, the Lord *breathes no word about the Tribulation.*

Then follows the solemn warning to servants concerning the effect of saying in the heart "My Lord delayeth His Coming?" Why is this warning given just here? We cannot ignore it, nor the connection in which it is given. For there it stands in immediate connection with the event which not a few servants of the Lord are introducing, in their teaching, between the Lord's people and the expectation of His Coming. We would not for a moment suggest that the teachers referred to are in the category mentioned by the Lord, for we are sure they are not saying "in their *heart*" that the Lord delays His Coming, much less are they doing the things mentioned in verse 49. Indeed, we must admit that one might be in fact saying in his *heart*, "My Lord delayeth His Coming," even though holding the view of His Coming as an imminent possibility.

What, therefore, we take to be the purpose

of this part of the discourse is, to point out the consequences that are liable to ensue through holding any doctrine which causes the heart of the saint to regard the Lord's Coming as a remote event. We learn from these words of our Lord that it is *exceedingly important in His Eyes* that His servants should *ever* be expecting His arrival. The *heart-expectation* of His Coming will lead to diligent and faithful service. As written in Luke xii. 36, He wishes them to be always "*like unto men that wait for their Lord.*"\* Upon such servants as He shall find watching when He comes He pronounces a special blessing. How could this blessing be gained, especially by such as pass away from the earth before He comes, except by *always* watching for Him—*which is exactly what He bids them do?* And how can they be always watching for Him if they expect before His Coming a period of years

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\* The writer well remembers the powerful effect this Scripture had upon him when he first came upon it, very early in his christian life. The impression has never passed away, and he earnestly prays it never may, "till He comes."

which cannot even begin for some time yet?

In the same Scripture (Luke xii. 38) the Lord intimates that He might "come in the second watch, or come in the third watch" of the *night*. How is that compatible with the view that He *cannot* come until the arrival of "the *day*"?

Especially would we direct attention to the words of the Lord recorded in Mark xiii. 32-37:

"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. *Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.* For the Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch."

(Surely this command to watch means that

the servant should do so from the very time of the departure).

“ Watch YE, therefore; for YE know not when the master of the house cometh; *at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning*: lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.”

It could hardly be said in plainer language that the Coming of the Lord might be in any one of the four watches of the night.

So much for the Lord's own teaching concerning the immediate prospects before His saints. And as the Lord taught His disciples; so have the apostles taught the Church. Always and invariably the prospect put before the saints has been the *Coming of the Lord*. Never, among all the numerous references to that prospect in which their teaching abounds, is there so much as an intimation or hint that the saints, or any of them, are to share apostate Israel's portion, the Great Tribulation. The saints were turned to God from idols to

wait for His Son from heaven, Who *delivers us from the wrath to come* (1 Theſ's i. 9, 10). They look for the Saviour to come out of heaven to change the bodies of their humiliation (Phil. iii. 21). They look for Him to appear the second time, apart from sin, unto salvation (Heb. ix. 28). Always thus. Never is any other prospect put before the saints by the inspired apostles.

So we here have that clear guidance which, as we said at the outset, the Scriptures afford for all *practical* purposes; and these are the *important* purposes.

We may not possess the ability to settle with certainty by definite Scripture testimony, the sequence of predicted events. The wish to do that may be merely the prompting of idle curiosity. But we *can*, and undoubtedly we *should*, follow the example of Christ and His apostles in keeping always before ourselves and before our fellow saints, the prospect of the Lord's Coming for us, as an ever imminent possibility, and in admonishing ourselves and them, to be in instant readiness

for Him. Beyond any doubt, that is, according to the Scriptures, our *immediate* prospect.

It needs no deep study of prophecy to discover what the Lord and His apostles taught as to this; and it is as evident as anything need be, that those brethren who preach and teach that the Church must share with Israel the terrible experiences of the Great Tribulation, and that there can be no Coming of the Lord for His saints, and no Resurrection or Rapture, until after the career of Antichrist is ended, have departed, in a matter of great practical importance, from the teaching of the Word of God.

Thus the discussion brings us, at the outcome, to the consideration of the *practical effect* of the teaching. Those who assume the serious responsibility of instructing the saints are bound to consider very carefully what will be the effect of the doctrine upon their hearts and lives of those who receive it. Will it help them? Will it increase their vigilance, admonish them as to their walk, and put them on

guard against the seductions of the world and the inclinations of the flesh? Or will it harm them, and tend rather to make them careless and indifferent in their conduct? If the teaching be such as cannot be of practical benefit to the saints, but is more likely to do harm (as I conceive must certainly be the effect of the teaching we are reviewing), then we are justified in regarding it with strong suspicion.

Our friends do not (so far as I am aware) point to any wholesome influence which their teaching could possibly exert upon the hearts or lives of the Lord's people. They say however, that, if the teaching be according to Scripture, it must be taught and accepted, regardless of its practical effect. And to this proposition we must needs agree. Let the doctrine of God's Word be given to His people regardless of what the consequences may seem to be. But we cannot conceive that a doctrine which is according to Scripture could possibly exert any but a purifying influence upon those who receive it.

Our brother, Mr. White, fully realizes that

the expectation of the immediate Coming of the Lord does exert a most wholesome influence upon the heart, for he says, in concluding his pamphlet, "With very many others I long, with increasing longing, for a fuller and deeper consecration to the Lord, both in word and deed. I believe this to be the *one great need* of the present time; but I fear lest, in our anxiety to promote it, we should be found dislocating the truth of God." We should, indeed, deeply regret to be found dislocating the truth of God, even though it be done with the praiseworthy motive of promoting what our brother well says is the "one great need of the present time." We are confident, however, that there is no danger of "dislocating the truth" though following the example of the inspired New Testament writers, who never, in a single instance, intruded upon the outlook of the saints the horrors of the Great Tribulation. We believe the Holy Ghost, in speaking of watching for the Lord's Coming, always says "To-day," never "To-morrow, or the day after."

Therefore we arrive at the end of our inquiry with the strong conviction that the attitude of "Looking for the Saviour," in expectation of His possible Coming any day, is not only most salutary and purifying in its influence upon the believer's conduct, but also is in full accord with the teaching of the Word of God.

THE END.