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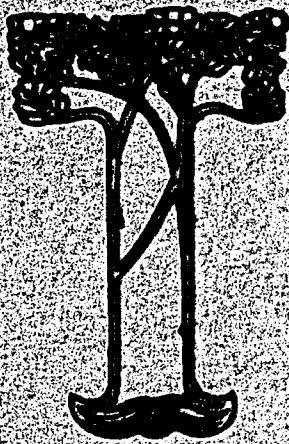
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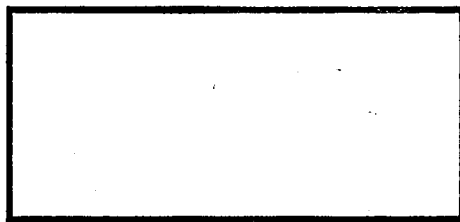
W. H. Hubbard

DOES THE CHURCH GO THROUGH THE GREAT TRIBULATION?



W. H. HUBBARD, S. T. D.

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DOES THE CHURCH GO
THROUGH THE GREAT
TRIBULATION?



BY

W. H. HUBBARD, S. T. D.
ST. PETERSBURG, FLA.

Preface

This booklet is an attempt to put in brief, available form the substance of two sermons covering two hours. These sermons were delivered in the Baptist Temple at St. Petersburg, Florida, to nearly eight hundred persons from about thirty States and several foreign countries. At the close of the sermons the congregation requested and furnished the money for their publication. They were preached extempore from brief notes and consequently much that appealed to the auditors as well as numerous illustrations and explanations of Scriptures used must be omitted.

May I urge the importance of verifying the references. While the writer's supreme desire is to correctly interpret and represent the Word of God, the statements made should be examined by the Scriptures named, to the end that your faith in these doctrines stand not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. (I Cor. 2:5)

Deeply conscious of the imperfections and limitations of this hastily prepared outline, arranged during moments borrowed from a busy pastorate at the height of the season, it is sent forth with the prayer and desire that our Lord and His Word be glorified in some way by it.

THE AUTHOR

St. Petersburg, Fla.

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Introduction

To understand the Word of God fully is not possible to one while in the flesh. At best and most one can know but in part. And the student of prophecy must guard against himself becoming a prophet in things not yet made known. Even Daniel did not, at the time, "understand" that which he foretold.

Because of this the final word on any doctrine cannot be spoken before the stage is set for the next act. And even then one must not be "wise overmuch" or beyond the Word. Probably not until "the end," when Jesus "shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God," having "put down all rule and all authority and power," including the destruction of death, will it be possible to fully know the Word of God. (I Cor. 15:24-26) Even the prophets, holy men as they were and even tho they were moved by the Holy Spirit to speak and write (II Pet. 1:20-21) "enquired and searched diligently."

"Searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

"Unto them it was revealed, (What was revealed? Not the manner or time, etc., which they sought to know, but only) that "not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven."

And not even unto the angels, who desired to "look into these things, was the meaning made known." (I Pet. 1:9-12)

But the Scriptures are given as Revelation. Being Revelation, Our Lord must intend them to be known when and in so far as such knowledge is necessary to the doing of His Will. An example of this is found in the words of the apostle recorded in Eph. 3:1-7. In chapter II he states that the enmity between Jew and Gentile has been abolished and they are now being builded together into "an holy temple of the Lord." Then, by way of explanation he says: (3:1-7)

1. "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

2. If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given to me to you-ward:

3. How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery;

5. Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

6. That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His Promise in Christ by the gospel:"

Yet this fact, this "mystery" now made known to and revealed through the apostle, was included in the purpose of God before the foundation of the world, but made known only now because the time for its fulfillment has arrived.

It was for this that the Lord said unto Ananias of Paul:

"Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel;

For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake." Acts 9:15-16)

To the end that the disciples of Jesus will search the Scriptures, much encouragement is found in the Word itself for those who would know the Master's will that they might do it. The Bereans were accounted more noble than others because they did so. (Acts 17:11)

We are told that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. (Rom. 15:14) And again that all things happened to former generations for "ensamples; and are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." (I Cor. 10:11) And to Timothy it was said in reference to the "holy Scriptures" which were taught him at his mother's knee, they "are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus," because "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." (II Tim. 3:15-17)

If by the Scriptures one is to be made wise unto salvation, and if they are sufficient and profitable to one's thorough equipment unto all good works, they must be understandable. So we can see the significance of the exhortation to "show" one's self "approved" unto God by "rightly dividing the word of truth," and also the wisdom of the advice given to Timothy to:

"Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." (I Tim. 4:15-16)

"Search," then "the Scriptures" for in them is eternal life in Christ Jesus made known. And this includes the knowledge of all the rest of God's gifts. (Jno. 5:29)

To the end that the Scriptures may be revelation instead of enigma:

1. The Holy Spirit is given. He moved holy men of old to speak and write. He moves holy men today to understand that which He moved others to write. The author of the Word is its interpreter.

"If ye love Me, keep my commandments," said Jesus.

"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever;

"Even the *Spirit of truth*; whom the world cannot receive, because it

seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him; for He dwelleth in you."

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, *He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance*, whatsoever I have said unto you." (Jno. 14:15-17-26)

The "if," and "keep," and "and" of verses 15 and 16 are the conditions by which this promise is localized, personalized, and individualized. Meet these conditions, and the "Spirit of Truth," the "Comforter," will "shew," "guide into," and "reveal" present truth and truth to come as given in the Scriptures. (Jno. 16:12-15)

After one has availed himself of all that art, science, scholarship and research can contribute to his understanding of the Word, he can, at best, know only the letter which killeth UNLESS he has the unction from the holy One that makes him sensitive and responsive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit into truth. (See I Jno. 2:20-28)

2. It is further indicated that the student must "rightly divide the word of "truth" if he is to be "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." (II Tim. 2:15)

If this is done the Dispensational character of truth will be recognized. While all Scripture is true, it does not all apply to the same persons or to all times. Revelation is progressive in fact and record as well as in one's apprehension of it. A truth in one dispensation may have served its purpose and be not applicable at a later time. This is true even though it may be written for the learning and profit of this dispensation. The law was our schoolmaster to lead us to Christ. Having brought us to Christ, He becomes the end of law for righteousness to them that believe, even though the law is still true (Gal. 3:24-25), so that we are no longer under the law, but under grace. See this as set forth in Gal. 3:21-26.

Likewise must a difference be put between Israel, the Church and the Gentile world. One must not apply the Scriptures to all or one of these when it refers only to another.

So also must one recognize that the mere letter may kill because one fails to get the message contained in the letter. According to the mere letter Jesus is a door and the believers are sheep. But there is a meaning in the letter into which one is to be guided by the "Spirit of Truth." This is true of much of the Word. To merely quote passages of Scripture is no evidence that one understands the Word of God. A parrot or a phonograph may do that. The grocer has all ingredients for making bread. But it is the baker who rightly divides them and gives them life as bread.

3. Equally important is it that any doctrine taught must be consistent with the whole and the general teachings of the Scriptures. To use isolated or detached portions of the Word, wrenching them from their context to support a position contrary to the general tenor and genus of the Gospel,

is to use the Word deceitfully and hold it in unrighteousness, thus creating schisms in the body and inviting the Lord's disapproval. (Rom. 1:18-22; II Thess. 2:10)

4. And the purpose of all study and teaching of the Word must be the spiritual edification of the Church.

"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." (Rom. 14:19)

"Let all things be done unto edifying." (I Cor. 14:26)

"For as much as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church." (I Cor. 14:12)

"And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."

For what purpose were they given?

"For the *perfecting* of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the *edifying* of the body of Christ:"

And this is to continue

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:"

In order

"That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up (or be edified or built up) into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Eph. 4:11-15). This should be the purpose of all Bible study. By doing this we shall glorify our Christ and hasten His coming.

5. And to this study one must bring the "good and honest heart." For "as one thinketh in his heart" (not head) "so is he." And from it are the issues of life. The parable of the soils sufficiently and strikingly illustrates the importance of this. After Jesus had spoken the parable of the sower

. . . "His disciples asked Him, saying, What might this parable be?

And He said, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand." (Unto you, as a class, you who are interested enough to seek My explanation and to find the truth clothed in the letter, unto you it is given to know.)

Now the parable is this: "The seed is the Word of God.

"Those by the wayside are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with

joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away."

And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring forth no fruit to perfection.

But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it and bring forth fruit with patience." (Luke 8:9-15)

Note each word of this last verse, "honest and good heart," "heard," "keep," and "bring forth with patience." These shall know because unto them the Holy Spirit shall "shew" or demonstrate and "guide into" the word.

6. And further, as relates to dispensational questions, especially our present study, we must remember that dispensations or epochs do not begin and end abruptly. One merges into the other as day into night or night into day. That is why our diagram is of lapping circles. The present or church dispensation of grace did not begin upon this earth full-born, but came as the day dawns and grows. It will be followed by the Millenium as another day which dawns and grows. Between the Millenium and the present day is the darkening night of the great tribulation which is the beginning of the day of the Lord (II Thess. 2:8), and the day of vengeance of our God. (Isa. 61:2; II Pet. 3:12) Sometimes this age is spoken of as "man's day." This relates to the course of this world, where man's wisdom, man's activities and reason are exalted above the Christ and the wisdom that cometh from above. (James 1:5; 3:13-18) Its type was in the days of the building of the city and Tower of Babel. The key to this day of man is the same as to its prototype, ancient Babel—"Us," "let us make a name," "let us build" to "reach heaven." And its end shall be the same—"confusion" worse confounded, followed by the great tribulation in which "they may not understand one another" and their work will end unfinished or be burned. (Gen. 11:1-9) This is true of those in the Church as well as out of it. It is of those in the Church the apostle is speaking when he said:

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day—(What day? This writer believes it to be the great day of His wrath, including the great tribulation (Isa. 61:2; Rev. 6:17)—shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." (I Cor. 3:12-15)

This is the fire of the great tribulation. The Lord brings His reward with Him when He comes. (Rev. 22:12) The judgment of disciples for deeds done in the body after they became disciples and award for the same will be after the work is revealed or manifested by fire. And this fire is during the great tribulation and the appearing of the Lord. (II Thess. 1:7-10; 2:8)

7. Another point preliminary that will help us is to keep in mind that the "day of the Lord" covers the great tribulation and the Millenium. It will be preceded by the translation of the true Church, the return of many Jews to Palestine, a federation of the Gentile Nation under one head (the Superman or Antichrist). These Gentile Nations are representative of the Roman Empire, which in their gathering together and federation or league, will be as the toes of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

The day of Jehovah includes also the coming of Jesus to the earth with His wife in judgment. (Phil. 3:20-21; I Thess. 4:13-18; Mark 13:14-20; II Thess. 1:7-10, 2:8; Rev. 20:1-6; I Tim. 6:15, and others) All who are asleep in Jesus at His coming for His bride and who are alive and *look for His appearing* will be included in the translation and first resurrection as the conditions of worthiness to escape apply only to those of living ones who are on earth at that time, and those who sleep in Him. But those not ready who are alive then, will be left and go through the tribulation.

8. Again, prayer, real prayer and soul exercise seem essential to the understanding of the Word. Apart from any philosophy of prayer, the fact is fundamental. Each vision of the prophets and each interpretation and application of the Word witnessed unto by the Holy Spirit was associated with prayer, much prayer, soul prayer. Prayer seems to create the atmosphere in which the Holy Spirit manifests Himself and demonstrates the Word. And prayer prepares the disciple to receive and transmit the Word as the silver solution makes sensitive the photography plate. Daniel, much beloved of God, was left famished and sick after his vision, and needed divine succor and refreshing. Astonishment and fear filled his heart. Each vision was preceded and followed by prayer and fasting. One cannot increase in knowledge of the Word of God or be guided into the truth and have it demonstrated unto him without travail of soul and much application. Truly in this more than in other things of the Kingdom, one must reflect if he is to know and be changed.

Even Jesus was anointed with the extraordinary powers necessary to His work and the understanding of the Scriptures in answer to prayer. "Power, like character, comes from the fountain of prayer." Prayer prepares to meet God, to hear God, and to read His Word, and to understand it. So then with a spirit bathed by prayer in the Spirit of God, the inspirer of the Word, one must bring a good and honest heart to the study of the Word.

In that Word God has given a sufficient revelation, and waits to interpret it in experience and history and to guide the earnest student into its truth.

May we bring this good and honest heart, baptized by His Spirit, to the question before us: Does the Church Go Through the Great Tribulation? It will be considered under the following heads:

- I. What is the Great Tribulation?
- II. What is the Church?
- III. Some marks of the Bride.
- IV. Some Reasons for the Position Taken.

1. WHAT IS THE GREAT TRIBULATION?

I. It is a period of unexampled trouble on the earth, between the coming of Jesus from heaven to meet His waiting bride in the air, and His descent to the earth with her after she becomes His wife. It was of this that Jesus spoke when He said in the fourteenth chapter of Mark:

"Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.

"And ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake; but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

"But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not (let him that readeth understand) then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains:

"For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.

"And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He hath chosen, He hath shortened the days.

"And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, He is there; believe him not:

For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.

"But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things."

"And arms shall stand on His part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.

"And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall be corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.

"And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days. (Dan. 11:31-33)

"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." (Chap. 12:1)

This same "day of the Lord" is pictured by Zechariah. Jerusalem, at that time, will be a "cup of trembling" and a "burdensome stone to all people" and the Lord will smite and destroy all peoples and nations unfriendly to the house of David, but He will save out from it the tents of Judah first, "and preserve the remnant" and those sealed in Rev. 7:2, 9, 14. (Zech. 12:10; 14:1-4; 13:8-9) Luke, Chap. 21:

In Luke we read: "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares," said Jesus.

"For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

"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." (21:34-36)

Other references: (Dan. 7:31-39; Zech. 13:8 and 14:2-5; Math. 24:21; Mark 13:14-27; Luke 21:34-36; Rev. 3:10, 11 and 9:6-20, and 16:16 and 19:20; Dan. 9:24-27; Jer. 30:7)

2. It is the time for the supremacy of the Antichrist; of the judgment of Rev., Chap. 16; of the Armageddon. It is the latter half of the seventieth week of Daniel and the time of Jacob's trouble. (Acts 1:11. Heb. 10:12, 13. I Thess. 4:15-17. Math. 25:1-11. Rev. 19:7, 8, and 21:9, 10. II Thess. 1:7-10 and 2:3, 4, 8. Math. 24:29. Dan. 7:13, 14)

3. While there are many times of trouble for the people of God named as tribulation the great tribulation is so much worse than all others that "no flesh," not even the "elect," would be able to endure it did not God shorten it, and grant protection to them. (Math. 13:21. Jno. 16:33. Acts 14:22. Rom. 5:3. II Cor. 1:4. Rev. 14:14-20. Zech. 13:8. Dan. 12:1. Math. 24:21, 22-25. Rev. 7:2-9, 14)

4. It marks the transition from the dispensation of grace and the Church to the Millenium. It is generally recognized as the latter half of Daniel's seventieth week, when the Antichrist, as the head of the most oppressive and godless form of human government and Gentile world power, is ruling over Palestine, to which many Jews have returned. He breaks his covenant with them, seeks to set himself up as God and to substitute his religion for the Christian religion. (Dan. 11:36-45 and 12:1. II Thess. 2:3-8. Rev. 13:4-18)

5. While the great tribulation involves the entire earth, its arena is Palestine and its center Jerusalem. (Zech. 12:10; 13:8; 14:1-5. Luke 21:25-36. Rev. 16:13-16 and 19:11-16)

6. Primarily it refers to Israel, but all the nations of the earth will be affected by it. (Jer. 30:7. Dan. 12:1. Zech. 12:1-3, 10, 11 and 14:2. Luke 21:25-36)

7. It will be brought to a close by the descent of the Lord with His saints, culminating in the Armageddon preparatory to setting up the Kingdom of our Lord. (Isa. 29:6. Dan. 7:8-10. Zech. 14:1-7. II Thess. 2:8, 11, 12. Psa. 21. Rev. 16:14-19, 19:16-21. Isa. 14:15-17. Rev., Chapters 8:11. II Thess. 1:7-10)

8. It is the time of the trumpet judgment as told in Rev. 8:1-21,

then moving on again from Chap. 11:15 to the glorious appearance of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Of these plagues Dr. A. B. Simpson says: "They represent calamities of such a supernal and stupendous character as to make all history pale before their horrors. They are literal armies from the depths of hell that come forth to torment the human race and to give to the men that have chosen the devil as their leader a full taste of his dire dominion. Already science has shown us that the most dreaded forms of disease come to us through the assault of actual living germs, armies of destroyers from the bottomless pit that prey on human flesh and blood as well as human souls. If already under the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit and the dispensation of grace these awful forces can bring such dire calamities upon men, and if the demon spirits represented under the figure of frogs in the sixteenth chapter can mobilize the armies of the world for their last great battles, how much more dreadful must be the outlook when the day of grace shall have ended and the world shall have been given over for a season to the power of Satan and the wrath of God! Then indeed shall be a time of tribulation such as was not from the beginning of the world nor never shall be, and "except the day should be shortened no flesh would be saved."

Arrayed against Jesus will be the Antichrist leading the forces of the world, the flesh and the devil, and a Christless church; the False Prophet, representing the unchristian philosophy and wisdom of the ages; Satan and all forces alien to God and His Christ. But the judgment of God leads up to Armageddon, when the antichristian forces will be destroyed and the Millennium reign begun. The battle of Armageddon is short and decisive. The Antichrist, Satan, and the False Prophet marshal the alien hosts. Flushed with brief and seeming victories, they march from Jerusalem to the plains of Megiddo which become their Waterloo. The leaders are cast alive into the lakes of fire. Satan is bound for a thousand years, and the Antichrist is destroyed. Then can be seen:

... "thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." (Rev. 20:4-6)

The apostle had this in mind when he exhorted the Thessalonians to goodness and faith with power that would prophecy their worthiness to escape the great tribulation.

"So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:

"Which is 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:

"Seeing 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 Highty angels,

"In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

"Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power;

"When he shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

"Wherefor also we pray always for you, that our God would count you *worthy* of this calling." (II Thess. 1:4-11)

II. WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

1. The Greek word used is *ekklesia*, which means assembly or congregation. It is used to designate any gathering in which some come out from the mass of people. It is used in Acts, 19th chapter, to designate the town meeting in Ephesus. The church of Jesus is His called out, composed of those who become His disciples and followers.

2. Structurally it is designated a building, composed of living stones, built up for a habitation of the Lord. (Eph., Chap. 2:19-22)

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone;

"In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

"In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Also I Pet., Chap. 2:3-6:

"If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

"To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

"Wherefor also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded."

3. Functionally, the Church of Christ is designated His body of which He is the head. As the head functions through the body seeking to carry out its will and come into touch with things without and with people, so Jesus through His Church is to come into touch with the world and make known unto them His Will. It is His medium of communication and transmission with and to mankind. It is to visualize and activate the will of its head.

The body is composed of many members. These are baptized into one by the Spirit. (I Cor., Chap. 12) And as the body is not part of the building or city or world in which it activates, neither is Christ's body or Church a part of the world, being in it but not of it (John 17:14-16) an organism in the organization of so-called Christendom.

4. Affectionately the Church of Jesus is named as His bride and also as His wife. (Eph. 5:23-32; Rev. 19:7, 8; 21:9, 10; 22:17) "But now she is a Virgin of sorrow and affliction, a companion in suffering with her espoused Husband, the Lord Jesus Christ." (II Cor. 11:2) And this because He has chosen her out of the world, and the true Church, the bride, will be hated by the world, persecuted as it persecuted the Lord. (Jno. 15:19, 20)

(Jno. 17:11-18) This persecution of the true Church by the world and the worldly organization will continue until He comes to take her away and to save her out of the great tribulation. (I Thess. 4:16, 17; Rev. 3:10) The spirit and attitude of Martha may be said to represent the body as an organization, and that of Mary as the bride or the organism. He loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it and present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:25-28)

It may be that some disciples in every age and place may constitute the building; some the body and some the Bride, according to their respective temperament, ability and attitude toward Jesus and relation to the Word, just as the services of the Temple were divided among the priests.

To the disciples of Jesus are given various and different gifts, in order that the Church may lack in no gift or come short in any service. But all these are baptized and fused into one by the Holy Spirit so that there be no schism in the body. (I Cor., Chap. 12)

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols even as ye were led. Wherefor I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

"And there are differences of administration, but the same Lord.

"And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

"To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

"To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

"But all these worketh that one the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bound or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

"For the body is not one member, but many."

And Jesus indicates that these gifts and the opportunities and need to

use them is "according to his several ability." (Math. 25:14-30) And these are all to be used for the building up of His Church and the glory of God in His name. And ability is the measure of responsibility, as responsibility is the measure of culpability and so of awards. (Math. 25:14-30)

The seven letters of Revelation are regarded as descriptive of seven stages of the development of the Church, as well as being addressed to local churches as named. The church at *Ephesus* is represented as an orthodox, spiritually ecclesiastic body, but having left its first love and legitimate works of a church, had substituted works for spirituality and so was warned by the Lord. This is probably the post-apostolic period.

The church at *Smyrna* was as its name indicates, marked by godliness, sweetness and patient sufferings for the truth. So it is encouraged by the Lord and assured of being delivered from the temptations and receiving a crown of life. This ended probably about the third century.

Pergamos represents a worldly church, even permitting the god of this world, Satan, to have sitting in it. The triumph of Constantine and of his influence at the Necean Council, united Church and State, making Christianity the established religion of the Roman Empire. Heathen temples became Christian sanctuaries and heathen dogmas became Christian practices.

The church at *Thyatira* became even more godless, being led into sin by Jezebel, a self-styled prophetess under whom it became easy for the Romany apostacy and Papacy and ritualism for gain to grow. It is warned against the undue influence of the feminine element dominating in the life of the church.

This developed into a dead formalism in *Sardis* in the middle ages when the Lord declared of the church it had a name to live, but was in reality dead. Yet the body and bride were alive and of the union with the great head of the Church, Jesus, there came forth such children of protest as Huss, Wycliff, Cramer, Luther and others. It was strong and weak.

Next came the *Philadelphia* church, which may be identified with the period of the Reformation,, in which though having but "a little strength," it reaffirmed the Bible and protested against man's substitutes for grace and the Book. Because of this the Lord assured it that it should be kept "from the hour of tribulation" that was coming upon the whole earth and which would be near His coming.

Then comes the *Laodicean* stage, which seems to fit today. It represents the growing apostacy when the formal church shall be neither hot nor cold spiritually, but indifferent and self-satisfied. But it is active and alive in human organization and social service. But its wordliness and self-conceit are so obnoxious to the Lord that He denied it as His church and called it the church of the people themselves. This day and stage seem to have arrived.

But in each stage the Lord appeals to them to repent and be overcomers,

seeking to influence them by rewards and to encourage them by richest promises. He ceased to deal with the church as an organization and appeals to the individuals who are of the organism. Listen to Him: "I know thy works." The only thing in evidence was works. The church of today is measured by and measures its members by works, any kind of works just so it is works.

"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness doth not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see.

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous, therefore, and repent.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne even as I also overcame and am set down with My Father in His Throne.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." (Rev. 3:17-22)

Thus Jesus calls to the worldly churches today, seeking to woo and win unto Himself those who have "the spirit of Christ" and are therefore His. (Ro. 8: 9, 14) And these who hear and come to Him, overcoming all that is between them and their Lord constitute the bride, beloved and loving.

Now, does the Church go through the great tribulation?

Yes and no!

The mere nominal professor, who has but the form of godliness without the life thereof, who knows not the Lord Himself, but is only a part of the organization or merely a church member, will.

But the true Church, which is the body and bride, the organism in the organization, will not. It is composed of the overcomers who, having an ear to hear what the Spirit sayeth to the churches, heed the call of the Lord, and, having opened unto Him, know the joy of supping with Him himself. These by divine affinity, will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air before the great tribulation. As Dr. C. I. Scofield has said: "Removing the real believers who have kept His word and have not denied His name before the great tribulation (Rev. 3:10; I Thess. 4:14-17), the mass of Laodicean luke-warmness and mere profession is left to its horrors." Here it shall be manifested though saved as by fire. They cannot be of the bride and body of Christ, but they will rise to the opportunity during the great tribulation, and seal their faith that was dormant and at ease during the dispen-

sation of grace, and so serve Him that they may be "before His throne," serving Him in His temple after His coming to be glorified. These will then glory with Him because they have glorified Him when days were dark and fires were fierce. (Rev. 7:14-17)

Are you, reader, among the lukewarm whom the Lord will spew out of His mouth to pass through the tribulation, or the loyal who are faithfully performing the tasks and utilizing the privileges of grace, thus showing yourself "worthy to escape it?" The ominous conditions of the present day argue for the near approach of this hour. May its imminence stimulate to greater endeavors to bring the lost to know Jesus and to be ready when He comes.

III. SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BRIDE

1. Between the bridegroom and the Bride there will be the mutual and reciprocal attraction of love. He loved the Church and gave Himself for it. (Eph. 5:24-27) And the Bride, having not seen Him, yet loving Him because believing in Him, rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory. (I Pet. 1:8) This mutual love constitutes an affinity so strong, sensitive and vital, that Jesus manifests Himself to the Bride when others have no consciousness of His nearness. And when He comes from the Father's throne into the air above the earth, she will be drawn unto Him as the needle is drawn into polarity to the north. This will explain why one shall be taken and another left. (Math. 24:40, 41; Luke 17:34-37) The nearness of the loving Christ finds the yearnings of the bride for the absent bridegroom in the hearts of those who "look for" and are waiting for His coming.

The faith that made for joy in the absent but loved one will quicken, pulsing with enriching, increasing power until, like the Lord Himself on the Mount of Transfiguration, the divine within will diffuse the physical and the glorified stage will become a present condition. Gravitation will no longer hold and "we shall be changed" even into His own glory. Such ones may even now, as F. W. Rortson says of the spiritual life, "Move where he will, there is a thought and a presence which he cannot put aside. He is haunted forever by the Eternal Mind. God looks out upon him from the clear sky, and through the thick darkness is present in the rain drop that trickles down the branches, and in the tempest that crashes down the forest. A living Redeemer stands beside him—goes with him—talks with him, as a man with his friend. The emphatic description of a life of spirituality is: 'Enoch walked with God.'"

2. Now this mutual love being a constraining power, will express itself in obedience and in love to the one loved. Jesus said to His disciples: "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him. (John 14:21-24) Love for Jesus which constrains one to keep His words, constrains Jesus to love, manifest, and abide with those thus loving Him.

This obedience may be named as the second mark of the Bride, for by it the few of the inner circle which constitute the organism and the "little Flock" to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom, are differentiated from the more formal organization. It is the love of the Bride, obeying in response to the love of the Bridegroom who because of it becomes obedient unto and serves the Bride. This is that eternal salvation to be possessed and known by "all them that obey Him, who Himself learned obedience by the things which He suffered. (Heb. 5:7-9)

3. The third characteristic or mark of the Bride is that she will be looking and waiting His coming to claim His Bride. Christ, who went into

the true, the heavenly holy place, appeared at the end of the ages to put away sin by sacrifice of Himself, and "*unto you who look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*" (Heb. 9:26-28) Does not this imply that to those who are not looking for Him He does not appear even though He does come into the air for His Bride? He appears to her, *because she is looking for Him.*

It was said of the Thessalonians that they turned from idols to serve the living God and to "*wait for His Son from heaven.*" (I Thess. 1:9, 10) This is the attitude of the Bride, looking for and waiting for the coming bridegroom, consequently, even though His coming shall be as a thief to those who are in darkness, it will not "overtake" the Bride as a thief, because she is not in darkness as to its imminence and eminence. To her it is the next thing in the divine program. For God hath not appointed us to wrath but to obtain salvation, "even deliverance from the wrath of the great tribulation" by our Lord Jesus Christ. (I Thess. 5:4, 9)

The pronouns here used indicate those who turned from idols to serve the living God and "to wait for His Son from heaven." (I Thess. 1:9, 10) To these the gospel came not "in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." (I Thess. 1:5) In these facts of experience are they differentiated from the great mass to whom it does come "in word only."

4. The Bride will be Holy Spirit possessed and led. These are some disciples who walk not after the flesh, but are led by, and walk after the Spirit. These who are thus led do "mind" the things of the Spirit." (Rom. 8:1-5) Of these it is said:

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

"But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by the Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. 8:9-11) The repeated exhortations to the believing disciples of Jesus to "be filled," to "resist not," and "quench not" and to "grieve not" the Holy Spirit indicate that one may be born of Him and yet not be possessed and controlled by Him, and that there is a difference between disciples in this respect.

Both the Scriptures and experience indicate a difference between being born of the Spirit and being baptized and filled and following Him fully. Jesus, before His ascension, breathed upon His disciples saying, "receive ye the Holy Ghost." (John 20:19-20) Yet He admonishes and commands them to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with holy power that would be theirs after "that the Holy Ghost" had come upon them. The wise

virgins were distinguished from the foolish in that they had the reserve oil "in their vessels with their lamps." Oil is the symbol of the Holy Spirit. (Math. 25:1-11) Those who lacked this reserve above immediate and ordinary needs, went not "to the marriage." These who go to the marriage have the ear to hear what the Spirit sayeth to the churches and therefore will hear the summons and be caught up, because they are not walking after the flesh, but after the Spirit, their guide unto Christ Jesus.

5. Ephesians 5:22-27, 32, suggests another characteristic. The Bride will be in submission to the Lord, who is the head and Saviour.

... "Christ is the head of the church; and He is the saviour of the body.

"Therefore as the church is subject to Christ . . .

... "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it:

"That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

"That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

"He nourishes and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church;

"For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

"This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

6. The Bride will be seeking those things which are above because of the desire and expectation of appearing with Him when He appears in glory. (Col. 3:1-4) Her affections are now there because He is there. This seeking things above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God seems to be both motive for and evidence of adjustment which establishes and maintains the affinity which responds to the approaching Christ when He comes for His Bride.

Because the "glorious appearing" of Jesus Christ is the "blessed hope" of the Bride she is looking for it, keeping herself in readiness to be "caught up to meet the Lord in the air." Consequently she is seeking those things which are above because by them life is enriched and so she shall not be ashamed at His appearing, and will be "at home" with him in the place he has gone to prepare for her. This indeed is the "blessed hope" in that those who have it will seek to purify themselves even as he is pure, and to be acceptable unto Him whether they are in the body or absent from it (Tit, 2:11-14. II Cor. 5:6-9. I Jno. 3:1-4).

7. Luke 21:34-36 indicates who will be "*accounted worthy*" to escape the great tribulation.

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the earth.

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."

These qualities, then, will characterize the Bride; taking heed unto self as to doctrine, hearts not overcharged with things of this world, and so overcome with self; faithful servants, ministering to others on behalf of the Lord and in the things of the Gospel.

8. In short, the members of the Bride will, like the Lord, be in the world but not of it, composed of the overcomers who hear or heed what the Spirit says to the churches, and whose hearts are open to Jesus personally and so they sup with Him and He with them. To the Bride Christ will be all and in all. Attachment will be to Him. (Rev. 3:20-22)

See these characteristics indicated in the seven letters in Revelation to the churches. The church at Ephesus had left its first love and its first work and was called back to these in repentance under threat of losing its candlestick. Christ was the first love, and having substituted something else for Christ at first, the church had fallen from the relation and character of the Bride. This fundamental principle may be traced through these letters until, coming to the Laodicean church, little, if any place is given in it to Christ Himself. The Laodicean church is proud and self-sufficient, having no sense of need because rich in this world's goods, yet poor, naked, and wretched before God. In all stages of the church only some are to be accounted worthy and those are the overcomers who keep Christ first.

The others, being not of the Bride, shall go through the tribulation to be chastened because as many as He loves He rebukes and chastens. Be zealous therefore and repent. (Rev. 3:19) The great tribulation is the chastening fires, over which the Lord sits as the refiner of silver, watching, guarding these imperfect, unfit, unworthy but loved ones, until the dross has been purged and they are ready to reign with Him and to "offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. (Malachai 3:3)

IV. SOME REASONS FOR THE BELIEF THAT THE CHURCH WILL BE DIVIDED WHEN JESUS COMES FOR HIS BRIDE AS TOLD IN I THESS. 4:13-17

1. The arguments against this position are unsatisfactory and inconclusive. Most of them seem to be built on mere assumption or to encourage lukewarmness. Among these may be noticed:

(1). The words of Jesus, "no man can pluck them from my hand. (Jno. 10:28, 29) True, but some may of themselves "go back from following Him (Jno. 6:66) and make shipwreck of faith (Tim. 1:19), even though no other person than oneself can pluck one from the Lord's hand and keeping. Sanctification and faithfulness are as much matters of choice as the acceptance of Jesus as Saviour. If this is not so then man is a mere automation devoid of volition. If this is not so then why the continual exhortation in the Word to hold fast and to be faithful and to be overcomers? But for the believer to go into the great tribulation is not to be plucked from the Saviour's hand, but to have the wood, hay, and stubble of unworthy building burned and to be himself chastened that he might repent and not be ashamed at the appearing of the Lord and so enter with Him into the Kingdom. (I Cor. 3:13-15. Rev. 2:5, 16, 21; 3:3, 19. Jno. 2:28. Acts 14:22)

(2.) Again it is objected that faith being the victory that overcometh the world, all believers having faith therefore all believers have overcome the world, and must therefore escape the great tribulation.

(a) But it is believers and servants of the Lord who are exhorted to be overcomers and thus to show themselves "worthy" to escape the tribulation. Why so exhorted if all believers are overcomers and will escape it? The worthiness here named by the Saviour is the worthiness, not of imputed righteousness through faith in Christ, but of possessed righteousness through faithfulness and watchfulness as obedient servants of the Lord. (Luke 21:34-36) It was the church at Philadelphia, who had kept the word of His patience and who was to be kept by the Lord Himself "from the hour of temptation" which was to come upon "all the world to try them" that He exhorted to "hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." (Rev. 3:7-13) Why, if being believers they were already overcomers assured of the crown and of escaping the tribulation? There must have been a possibility of losing the crown and of going into the great tribulation to be tried and saved as by fire, else the Lord would not have exhorted them to repent that they might escape it.

(b) And again one may have faith and yet not overcome the world other than the first act of separating from it to receive Christ as Savior. And even though faith is the victory by which the world is to be overcome, all who have faith may not overcome the world, just as one may have

weapons and talents unused, or even used wrongly, or fail to reach the mark and object for which they are to be used.

(c) But all believers are not overcomers save in the initial act of receiving Jesus. If they are, why are believers exhorted to be overcomers so often after they have become disciples? It is members of the Church who are exhorted to be overcomers lest they fail of rewards and are chastened by their Lord. And it is to members of His Church that Jesus calls:

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous, therefore, and repent.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with My Father in His throne.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," exhorting them to hear and overcome in order that they might escape and be saved from the "hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3:10) having not been caught up from "the earth" out of it before it came. (Rev. 3:19-22)

(d) And it is not only the world that is to be overcome by those who are "counted worthy to escape" the tribulation or be "kept from" it by the Lord. They must "take heed" unto themselves lest at any time their hearts be "overcharged" with self-indulgence and the cares of this world. They must "watch and pray always" to be "accounted worthy to escape all these things" (told in verses preceding) that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man in that great day of His wrath (Luke 21:34-36; Rev. 6:15-17). False doctrines, self, unbelief, conformity to this world, the fear of death and Satan himself are named as among the things those accounted worthy to escape it, must overcome.

(e) Then there are degrees and different kinds of faith, some of which are commended and some of which are condemned. There is the "faith without works which is dead" (James 2:17-22); the faith of the devils who tremble yet are not saved because they do not surrender (v. 19); there is the faith like the grain of mustard seed, so vital that it moves mountains (Luke 17:6); there is the partial faith that can say "I believe, help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24); there is the faith that worketh by love (I Thess. 1:13); the faith that sacrifices and serves (Phil. 2:17); the faith which leaves one without excuse (Rom. 1:20, 32. 2-1); and the faith that makes for peace with God and brings justification and eternal life (Rom. 5:1; Phil. 4:7); and many other aspects of faith. All faith is not overcoming faith. If all who are in the church must be overcomers because they are in the church or even because they have a degree or kind of faith, then many in the churches do not believe for they not only do not overcome the world but are overcome by it (Ro. 12: 1, 2; Phil. 3:18). So then there are many in the

churches who must go through the great tribulation for they are walking according to the course of this world, and are so closely conformed to it that neither the world, the flesh, nor the devil have any quarrel with them, and they are at peace in Zion though it be the peace of death.

(3). Another statement against this position has been advanced based on Rom. 8:38, 39: Nothing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." This is true. God, who "so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," loves mankind even though they sin against and reject Him and are finally lost. But the Scripture indicates that whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom He receives. (Heb. 12:6-8) This He does *because* He loveth them. And even Jesus "learned obedience by the things which He suffered." (Heb. 5:8)

If the Lord permits some who believe on Jesus to go into the tribulation because they are not "*accounted worthy* to escape" it, it is because He loves them and would save them from that which renders them unworthy, not only to escape the tribulation but unworthy also to stand before Him and to welcome Him when He comes to be glorified in and with His saints, beyond the tribulation. (II Thess. 1:8-10; 2:7-10) Hear Him: "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten; be zealous *therefore* and repent." (Rev. 3:19) "Every son whom the Lord receiveth" He "chasteneth and scourgeth."

"If ye endure chastening, God dealth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"

"But if ye be without chastenment, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." (Heb. 12:6-8)

Those who bear the name of Christians if believers in Jesus, must be saved. Yet if at His coming for the Bride they are not ready, separate from the world and undefiled, they cannot be "accounted worthy." The fires of the great tribulation will be to them the purifying fires into which His love permits them to go to be purified. He will seal them against falling away and they will be brought through purified, because He loves them too well to give them up and because they have professed faith in His name. This is the tenor of all hortatory Scriptures. Because they loved and believed in Jesus, therefore are they to be purified and saved from dead works. (I Cor. 3:13-15)

2. A second reason for this position is that to escape the great tribulation and be able to stand before the Son of Man, are not unconditioned gifts of love or grace, but rewards and privileges for those who are accounted worthy of them. Therefore they are not necessarily included in God's gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ.. But the acceptance of this gift must be made before one is even an heir of grace. Eternal life is the gift of God. It is a gift of grace to all who believe in the name of Jesus, His Son. But there are some things which accompany salvation (Heb. 6:9) which are conditional experiences and which are rewards to saints and not

free gift to sinners. "Take heed to yourselves," watch ye therefore and pray always that ye may be *accounted worthy* to escape" and "to stand before the Son of Man." Luke 21:34-36)

The apostle Paul thanked God for the Thessalonian "brethren" because their growing faith, their abounding charity toward each other, their patience and faith in all their persecutions and tribulations were a "manifest token of the righteous judgment of God," that they "may be *counted worthy* of the Kingdom of God." (II Thess. 1:3-5)

Math. 24:45-51 indicates that the worthy ones will be the "faithful and wise servant" rendering reasonable service in faithful obedience to his Lord, who will *find him* "so doing" when his Lord, who is the Son of Man, cometh. While the unfaithful servant shall be appointed "his portion with the hypocrites." "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Does not Rev. 7:2, 9, 14, include in that "great multitude which no man can number" these, same sealed, tried ones, who were not worthy to escape the great tribulation or to be kept from it, but who during it had been His faithful witnesses even unto death, thus overcoming and joining the great host before His Throne? It must be, for it is composed of those who washed their robes, in which arrayed, and made them white in the blood of the lamb. This must have been done before the great tribulation if they come up from it during its progress, or at its close.

3. A third reason is because the Scriptures always recognize two classes of disciples and servants of the Lord. To the "Jews which believed in Him" Jesus said, "if ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (Jno. 8:31, 32) They believed in Him. The Scriptures teach that to them that even believe in His name "is the power given to become Sons of God." (Jno. 1:12) "He that believeth in Him hath everlasting life." (Jno. 3:16) So it is to believing disciples and therefore those to whom is given God's gift of eternal life, that He speaks these conditions which divide them into disciples and "disciples indeed." There are two types or classes.

It was a "faithful and wise *servant*" whom his lord made ruler over his household, and who was to be blessed if his Lord found him faithful at *His coming*. It was an "evil *servant*" to whom was appointed his portion with the hypocrites. Both were servants. But a distinction was put between them and the reward was according to their own worthiness. (Math. 24:42-51) It was "His own servants" of whom some were good and faithful and some of whom were "wicked and slothful" in the use of the talents with which they were entrusted. And the faithful entered into the joy of their Lord. But the unfaithful were cast into outer darkness. (Math. 25:14-30) Being a servant he remained a servant, though an unfaithful one. For the disciples of Jesus the outer darkness cannot be hell. There is no other place for him but the tribulation period.

Further, consider these Scriptures: "For other foundation can no man

lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ." "But let every man take heed now he buildeth thereupon." "Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it." What day? "Because it shall be revealed by fire." What fire? "And the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If the work abides, the worker shall receive a reward. If his work is burned, "he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." (I Cor. 3:11-15) What fire is there for the believer? For the servant? And again we are told: "We must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ, that each may receive the things done in the body." (II Cor. 5:10) And verses 1-10 show that it is the believer who is meant, as the apostle declares "we labor, that whether present or absent with the Lord, we may be accepted of Him."

Again Jesus tells us in Math., Chap. 7:21-23:

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.

"Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?

"And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity."

And the wise builders who founded themselves on the rock are those who not only hear His words but do them.

Mathew 25:1-11 shows us that some who even go out to meet the bridegroom will not attend the marriage. The marriage of the lamb will be when the Bride is caught up to meet Him in the air before the great tribulation. To some who went to meet Him were not ready when He came, the door will be shut until the Bride has become His wife and He comes with her (1 Thess. 4:16, 17; Rev. 19:7, 8), which will be at the close of the great tribulation. Surely at His coming for His Bride one shall be taken and another left—left to what? If He come for his Bride before the great tribulation and some will be left upon this earth, they must go into it, if not through it. For a division is made and the separation will take place when He comes for his Bride at the end of this age, and before the great tribulation.

4. But not only do the Scriptures recognize two classes of disciples and servants of the Lord, but also where Christ rebuked the churches in Rev. 2nd and 3rd chapters, calling upon those who had an ear to hear what the Spirit said to the churches, to repent and become overcomers, He put a separating difference between church members. Yet both classes are recognized by Him as being members of the churches. But only those hearing and repenting were to escape the threatened judgment.

Note that these letters are addressed to the churches. These churches are composed of professed disciples, people of whom it is said Jesus "loved

us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father." (Rev. 1:5, 6) Of these John said: "I John am your brother and companion in tribulation and in the Kingdom and patience of Jesus." (Rev. 1:9) Now it was these blood-washed members of the churches, these brothers and companions of the Apostle John, to whom Jesus said, "I have somewhat against thee" and unless you repent I will "remove your candlestick. I will come unto thee quickly, and fight against them (these evil ones) with the sword of my mouth," etc., calling upon individuals to repent and be overcomers, in order that they might sup with Him at the marriage supper. (Rev. 3:19-22) It was His own churches that He rebuked and would chasten, declaring He did it because He loved them and because he wanted them to repent.

And those who heard what the Spirit said to the churches heeding His call and so becoming overcomers were to receive rich reward. They were to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (verse 7); to be given "a crown of life" (verse 10); to receive a "new name" in "a white stone," a name known only by the one receiving it (verse 17); to be exempt from burdens other than their own faithlessness, and have power over the nations" and to be made custodians of the morning star (verses 6-28). These were to be clothed in white raiment, their names retained in the book of life, and to be confessed before the Father and the angels by Jesus. (Rev. 3:5) To them doors are opened which no man can shut; they would be worshipped by the enemies whom they overcame; kept from the great temptation and be made pillars in the temple of God with the name of God and the city of God written upon them. (Rev. 3:8-12)

But those who heard not what the Spirit said to the churches and did not repent were to be rebuked and chastened, yet they were church members. They would have their candlestick removed (2:5); be fought against by Jesus with the sword of his mouth (verse 16); cast into great tribulation and their children or converts to be killed and punished "every one according to his works" (verse 22, 23). He would come to them "as a thief (3:3); he would spew them out of His mouth in their naked wretchedness, and, because they refused the love of truth, they will grope blind and naked and poor into outer darkness of chastening, purging fires, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Math. 25:11, 13, 30, 46; Rev. 6:12-17)

But though this is but the reaping of their own sowing, God will temper His justice with mercy. They will be sealed and thus protected (Rev. 7:2). There will thus be with them one like unto the Son of God, who will companion them in the furnace, and His grace will be made sufficient and the day shortened for their sakes. (Mark 13:19, 20)

These will be His witnesses, sealing their testimony with their blood. Many will be faithful unto death and come out from the great tribulation, saved as by fire, yet saved and numbered with the redeemed before the throne. (Rev. 7:9, 14-17; I Cor. 3:15)

5. Because the apostacy is a falling away of church members and nominal disciples of Jesus.

An apostate "is one," says Dr. James M. Gray, "who once knew or professed to know and hold the truth of Christianity, but who has definitely renounced it." Not renounced its outward appearance and profession but the vital part of it, what are today termed the "fundamentals." The "apostacy," therefore, is a condition in the professing church that expresses a definite and permanent falling away on the part of many from "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." (Judge 3)

Dr. C. L. Scofield declares the Laodicean church to be the scriptural picture of an apostate church, being no longer even called the Lord's church, but "Babylon."

Now while, as some say, the Roman Catholic Church may be the present day form of the Laodicean church and therefore representative of the apostacy in its organized aspect, there are other churches who meet Dr. Gray's definition. (They have denied the deity, incarnation and atonement of our Lord Jesus, and utterly set aside His Word.) And in every church will be found some who are apostate. These cannot be caught up to meet Him in the air. They are not ready, neither are they looking for or waiting for His coming.

"The Laodicean spirit, however, is one of boastfulness, of pride in numbers and in outward apparent prosperity of the church. With all this groundless optimism there is utter blindness to the real unspirituality of the mass of the professing church members. The result is lukewarmness in the things essential and spiritual, and the end rejection by the Lord in disgust. "Removing the real believers who have kept His Word and have not denied His name before the great tribulation (Rev. 3:10, I Thess. 4:14-17), this mass of Laodicean lukewarmness and mere profession is left to its horror."

6. Then again because of the provisions made by the Lord to protect the elect and His disciples during the great tribulation argue for this position.

Every judgment of God is tempered with mercy and "all things" are made to "work together for good to them that love the Lord, to the called according to His purpose." Even in the day of divine wrath His grace and love are active and with His chastening is love and grace. The unfaithful, yet believing, who were not accounted worthy to escape "these things" and to be "kept from" the great tribulation, will, by the grace of God, be kept in it and enabled to win a crown. We read in Mark 13:19, 20, that the period of the great tribulation is to be shortened for the elects' sake. And in Rev. 7:2, 9, 14, the servants of the Lord are to be sealed against the destructive forces of that period.

In Rev. 6th chapter, we read that the great day of the wrath of the

lamb is come "and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

"And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

"And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

"And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

"For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

Then an angel, "having the seal of the living God" stopped the great tribulation. (Rev. 7:3)

Saying, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads."

These "servants" and "elect" of the Lord include not only the "remnant" or "one third" of Israel who are to come from the tribulation to constitute the nucleus for the future kingdom, but also the disciples of Jesus who will be His witnesses in the great tribulation, and among those who as saints will glorify and admire Him when He comes to establish the Kingdom and take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Luke 21:22; II Thess. 1:8-10)

In Col. 3:2 and I Pet. 1:2, and many other places saints are spoken of as "the elect" and times too numerous to mention are designated as servants of the living God and servants of Christ Jesus. Mat. 24:22 and others tell us "those days" are to be shortened for the "elect's sake." It is of and to disciples of Jesus they are addressed.

And those who will be on the earth immediately after those days, and who will be gathered together will be His "elect" and His "servants" so that it will be these disciples and servants of our Lord who were left who are to be sealed and protected, so that they will surely be saved though it be as by fire.

(Luke 21:36. Rev. 6:17; 7:3, 9, 14. Eph. 6:13. Psalm 1:5. Col. 3:2. I Pet. 1:2. Math. 24:22, 29-31)

7. A seventh reason is that the great tribulation is not only a period of unexampled trouble, but also of witnessing and evangelization. During this period the "gospel of the Kingdom" is again preached as a witness beginning where it stopped when the King was rejected, and God's dealings with Israel were suspended.

In a sense the great tribulation will be a "future probation" for the believer who was not ready when Jesus came for His bride and was not, therefore, caught up. Not a probation for salvation for the sinner, but for the sanctification of the saint. The great mass of disciples who, being blinded by the god of this world, believed the world was growing better with

promise of a millenium before Jesus came, will see their error and be converted and in the zeal of repentance become evangels of Jesus and witness to the truth. This must be so for all who "believe in His name" have eternal life as the gift of God, yet holding the Post-Millenium coming of the Lord, were not ready when He came and so were among those left. Yet as they believed in Jesus as Saviour the faithfulness of God and the love of Christ require their salvation. Nothing can separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus. And having begun a good work within them because of their belief in Jesus, He will continue it until the day of our Lord, which, beginning with the tribulation will include the judgment of the Millenium. Having learned their mistakes and seeing that the world program of social service and a world growing better with a Kingdom built up by the church and the products of worldly wisdom and zeal without a king are contrary to the Word of God, they will, with the remnant of Israel, be converted (not regenerated, which these disciples of Jesus were when Christ was accepted), but converted to see their errors, and will with great zeal preach and witness to the doctrines neglected.

Then cometh the end (Math. 24:14) and the night of the great tribulation will give place to the dawn of the Millenium. "Then shall that Wicked (the iniquity already at work) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." (II Thess. 2:6-12)

All the untoward forces, formal Christianity, Antichristian sentiment, increased in intensity and fully ripened during the tribulation because unrestrained, will be destroyed with the Antichrist, in whom they are fully personified, and in whose administration they are fully developed. As he and his reign are to be destroyed at the Epiphany or Revelation of Jesus with His church, when He comes to put down all rule and authority, and as this coming is at the close of the great tribulation, the "end" is then, when the Millenium begins (described in Math. 24:5-13 and II Thess. 1:7-10) even though the end is in progress from the beginning when Jesus comes for His bride. Dark and ominous are the clouds of today, heralding the coming night.

During this preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom and coming King, the witnesses will be protected by the seal of the Lord (Rev. 7:2-7). The remnant of Israel preserved will also witness and preach because it is the gospel of the Kingdom, (not of grace) again "at hand." Therefore being tried and proved will endure to the end of life, if not of the great tribulation. So that when Armageddon is on they will be saved *in* it if not before "as by fire"—so high a place is given them in heaven, as Rev. 7:9-14; 20:4-6.

8. This position seems consistent with the general teachings of the Word of God which puts a difference between faithful and faithless servants of the Lord and disciples of Jesus. God's great gift is eternal life in Christ.

Jesus. But even this is not given except to those who meet the stipulated conditions. Every promise and every blessing has its conditions, and God, who is faithful, rewards accordingly. Even the disciples of Jesus must appear before His judgment seat to receive according to their deeds and faithfulness. (II Cor. 5:10)

One of the incentives to faithfulness offered to the disciples of Jesus is to be overcomers in order that they might escape the great tribulation. Therefore the entire principle of rewards is removed if this exemption promised to the overcomers and faithful servants is to be given to all, whether faithful overcomers or not. Christ emphasized this principle in the parable of the faithful and wise stewards, when He said the one should be blessed and the other be beaten with stripes, many or few, according to their knowledge of the will of the Lord of that servant. (Math. 12:41-48)

Judgment must begin at the house of God, in which are both vessels to honor and vessels to dishonor, yet vessels of the household of God itself. (I Pet. 4:7; II Tim. 2:20, 21) But whether to honor or to dishonor is decided by the vessel itself. This is the general teaching of the Word of God. This distinction, then, must be maintained in this matter also, or the integrity and trustworthiness of the Word of God are impeached.

9. Another reason is found in the fact that many Bible students, recognized the world over for scholarship and devout spiritual discernment, recognize and teach a true church within the formal, worldly organization. Rev. W. E. Blackstone in his "Jesus Is Coming," which is a classic and a Scriptural Thesaurus on this subject, says: "The professing church (including Roman Catholic, Greek, and all nominal Christians) has conformed so largely to the world that the world has little if any controversy with her." (P. 64.) Again, "The professing Church is lukewarm, and, we fear, almost ready to be spewed out of the Master's mouth." "But there are those who, being rebuked of the Lord and chastened, are buying gold and white raiment and anointing their eyes and will overcome so that they may sit down with Christ in His Throne. (Rev. 3:14-22)

"There is," says he further, "truly a church, and it is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22, 23), *one and indivisible* (I Cor. 12:12-27) composed of all true believers in Him (Eph. 4:4-16). It may be called a church within, or among the churches—the wheat among the chaff" (P. 63). The true church which is not of the night (of the great tribulation) (I Thess. 5:5), being *watchful* and *prayerful*, will be accounted *worthy* to escape it by the Rapture and to stand before the Son of Man. (Luke 21:36; Rev. 3:10) And the saints of the tribulation who will be slain by the Antichrist during the great tribulation will be raised as the gleanings of the household of the first resurrection. (P. 65)

Dr. A. B. Simpson, founder of the Christian Missionary Alliance, and author of many books and pamphlets, says, in commenting on the Laodicean

stage of the church, which he places in today, that "it represents the Apostasy of Protestantism and the flood of liberalism that is already covering Christendom: that the Lord has ceased to recognize it as His church but acknowledges it is their own church, the people's church, declaring He will spew it out of his mouth. He appeals to those within it who will hear Him to come out from it unto Himself."

"But all through these seven pictures we find a church within a church, a minority whom the Lord appeals to as overcomers, because they hear the Spirit and are true to Jesus in the midst of the corruption of a worldly, naked, self-conceited, self-righteous, self-sufficient organization (P. 43, 44, Patmos).

Equally clear is Dr. C. I. Scofield, author of the Scofield Bible and many highly excellent books on Bible study. He says: "The epistles distinguish the church from the churches. The body of Christ is composed of those who have really believed in Him and are saved; the churches are composed of those who have professed to believe, or who, as children of professed believers have been baptized, and so are accounted to be Christians. Their profession may be of a true faith, or may be mere church membership." (What do the Prophets Say, p. 118) "The mass of profession does go through the great tribulation—the church which is the body does not." (P. 119)

"Removing the real believers from organized churches *who have kept His Word and have not denied His name, before the great tribulation—the mass of Laodicean lukewarmness and mere profession is left to its horror.*" (Rev. 3:10; I Thess. 4:14-17)

Dr. James M. Gray, Dean of Moody Institute, in defining the true church, says it is "the body of the *truly redeemed* of this dispensation, no matter of what locality, or to what class they belong." "These are the called-out ones in the sense that God by His Holy Spirit, has called them out of the world unto Himself through the exercise of their faith in Christ." (p. 58 of the Text Book on Prophecy) He, like the others referred to, puts a distinction between the organization and the organism in it, the worldly, Christ denying, self-centered, humanly controlled church remains after the body or bride is taken up to meet the Lord in the air, and as their taking up is just before the great tribulation those who remain, whether in the formal church or not, will enter the tribulation if not go through it. This includes all who are not watching, faithfully watching, waiting and ready for His coming, and faithful as His servants and witnesses even unto the end though the Lord delay in grace His coming.

Practically all students of the Word of God agree that the Scriptures recognize both faithful servants of the Lord and disciples of Jesus, and that a distinction is made between them as to their relation with the Lord and His coming Kingdom. The Lord also recognizes this distinction and teaches

a difference as to their relation with Himself and His attitude toward them, rewarding or chastening accordingly.

(Dan. 12:1, 2. Luke 12:4; 21:34-38. Math. 5:12. Luke 12:46-48. Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 10-12, 20-22)

This distinction is carried into the Millenium and the heavenly estates determining their position in His Kingdom, which position will be the result of their faithfulness during the church age. (Math. 19:28-30; 25:21, 23, 26-30. Luke 19:27)

Now that these conditions are decided before the Millenium and during the church age, and as only the overcomers and faithful are "accounted worthy to escape" the tribulation which comes after the church age and before the Millenium, the unfaithful and the great mass of professors who are not caught up, must go through the great tribulation to even come unto the Millenium or even be included in the great multitude named in Rev. 7:2-9, 14, 22:12-14, Luke 21:36, Rev. 3:10. Further passages showing this differentiating condition:

Dan. 12:1, 2. Luke 12:47-48. II Tim. 4:8, 2:19, 20. James 1:12. I Pet. 5:4; II Pet. 1:10, 11. I Cor. 3:12-15. Rev. 2:10, and many others.

If the faithless disciples and servants are to be saved because they only believe in Jesus (and this seems to be the only essential condition) then some place they must and will be chastened before their final estate, for seeing His as He is is commensurate with one's being like Him.

(I John 3:1-3. Eph. 1:7; 2:7-22)

10. Another reason is suggested by the words of John Baptist, Math., Chap. 3, 11th verse:

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, *and* with *fire*:

"Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Two baptisms by Jesus, just as there are two aspects of His work suggested in His own treatment of the prophecy in Isa. 61:1, 2, quoted by Him in Luke 4:16-19. He read:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

"To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Then

"He closed the book, and gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them were in the synagogue were fastened on Him.

"And He began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

"*This day*," the day of grace and the gospel, is "*this scripture*" that I read, fulfilled in your ears, "He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel of the acceptable year of the Lord." This anointing was at His baptism in water, when (Math., Chap. 3)

"Jesus being baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him:

"And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Then was He anointed to preach the gospel of the "acceptable year of the Lord." But there was one sentence in that prophecy relative to the Messiah and Savior that He omitted. It is this: "and the day of vengeance of our God." Then these words in Isa. 61, from which Jesus read, are followed by a beautiful description of the glory that shall follow (Isa. 61:1-11) the preaching of the acceptable year *and* the day of vengeance of our God."

In Acts 15:14-18, we find this same division of the days of our Lord and the order of Christ's ministry, *i. e.*, the gospel through which God visits the Gentiles to "take out of them a people for His name." Then "after this" to return to build again the tabernacle of God," "then" the residue of men to seek after the Lord."

The day of vengeance was omitted at that reading by Christ Jesus, because it was not yet. It is the day that is to follow in which the Son shall rule with the rod of iron." (Psa. 2)

Now the baptism administered by Christ in this "acceptable year of the Lord" is the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The baptism for the day of vengeance is the baptism of "fire." These are distinct and separate just as the two comings and the two resurrections and the several judgments, even though named in the same passage and even in the same sentence.

Dr. C. I. Scofield, in commenting on the typical meaning of fire, says: "It is essentially a symbol of God's holiness. It is expressed in God's judgments upon those condemned by His holiness, in self manifestation and in purification. The fire which manifested the sweet savor of the burnt, the meal and the peace offerings which He accepted, wholly consumes and destroys the sin offering because it represented sin."

(Gen. 20:24. Rev. 20:12-15. Exo. 3:2. I Pet. 1:7. I cor. 3:13-15. Also Mal., Chap. 3)

"But who may abide in the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap:

"And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

"Then shall the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years."

To follow the typical use of fire beginning with Genesis, justifies the

conclusion that the words of John Baptist are not two aspects of the one baptism of the Holy Spirit, but that one refers to the baptism of the Holy Spirit which marked the Gospel or Church dispensation which began with Jesus' first advent, and the term "fire" refers to the character or differentiating work of the dispensation beginning with His second advent, including the great tribulation at the close of which He "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, and will consume with the spirit of His mouth and will destroy with the brightness (fiery) of His coming. (II Thess. 1:7, 2:3)

The great tribulation is a combination of the natural development of sin and the spirit of Antichrist after the restraining power of the Holy Spirit and the Church is removed;

The manifest wrath of God declared from heaven against all unrighteousness; the fury and hatred of Satan, the Beast of the Antichrist, and the time of the wrath of the Lamb. (II Thess. 2:7. Rom. 1:18. Rev. 12:12-17, 6:12-17)

At the close of it Jesus is revealed, coming with flaming fire to take vengeance on those that know not God and believe not the gospel. (II Thess. 1:8) He then comes, not meek and lowly, seeking the lost, and to give the comforts of the Gospel and of the Comforter, but to baptize the world in "fire," following the taking up of the Bride. He then is Judge. Even in His letters to the seven churches the Lord Jesus continually appears as the holy and heart-searching Judge, whose eyes are as a flame of fire and His hands stretched out to smite His foes as with a rod of iron and as the broken vessels of the potter. From His awful throne proceed lightnings and thunders, and voices of the dreadful forms of the Black Horse of War, and the Pale Horse of Death go forth at His command. It is the day of His wrath. It is the baptism of fire.

Now, who will go into the great tribulation and therefore experience, at least the beginning of this baptism of fire? Among them will be Israel and the nominal Christian professor. Not being caught up there is no other place for them to go, for they cannot die even though they want to. (Rev. 6:9)

This is the fire that will try and manifest every man's works built on Christ Jesus, which shall be burned if they be only the hay, and stubble of the worldly conformed Christian and of the Laodicean kind. (I Cor. 3:11-15; Rev. 3:14-21) There is no other place of formal "inspection," testing and manifestation for the disciples of Jesus but at His Judgment seat. They cannot come into condemnation because of their faith. But they must come up for inspection and awards. (II Cor. 5:9, 10)

11. Another reason for this position is the instinctive, innate recognition by all people of the justice and necessity of putting a difference between the faithful and the unfaithful. Both God and man have always put a difference between right and wrong and have declared it inevitable that one's

reaping depended upon one's sowing unless the Grace of God interfered. (Gal. 6:7)

Even God's grace and mercy have their conditions. If He should waive these conditions in favor of some, after He had convicted all under sin that He might have mercy upon those who believed, He would be a respecter of persons. The Scriptures declare He is not and that with Him there is no difference, except as that difference is decided by the actions of mankind. While the things which accompany salvation are available for all in Christ Jesus, they become part of one's experience only as one meets the conditions upon which such experience depends. The justice of rewards for faithfulness and achievement all recognize. To escape the great tribulation is a reward to the faithful.

12. Another reason may be found in the loss that will come to those who are "not worthy to escape" it and yet though not worthy are saved from it. The great tribulation is, in a sense, the purifying, fitting fires for those who, though believing in Christ, remain carnal and babes as in I Cor. 3:2. In the great tribulation, protected by the divine seal (Rev. 7:3, 2) and with its duration shortened out of consideration for them, these servants of the Lord, and elect, who had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, but during the church age had not been overcomers will now be enriched and enlarged by their sufferings and their loyalty to Jesus as His witnesses. They will have an opportunity to earn the martyr's crown. (Rev. 7:14)

Suppose now that the imperfect, unready ones had been caught up before the tribulation in which they were tried and given opportunity to try again. Greater loss than the marriage of the Lamb would have been theirs, as of the foolish vergins in Math. 25:1-11. I picture these among the loved of the Lord. From that love nothing, not even the great tribulation can separate them. For having loved His own He loved them through to the end. (Jno. 13:1)

I see our Lord brooding over these sons of Levi of the Royal priesthood, sitting as the refiner of silver, to purify and purge them as silver and gold are purged of their dross, to the end that they "may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." And as soon as He beholds His face reflected back as He leans over the molten metal of the crucible, a way of escape is opened and they have been approved. To these unworthy ones great and eternal loss would come were they saved from the tribulation. For them the loving, caring Lord makes even the great tribulation to work together for their good.

13. Once more I think of the loss to our Lord and the church and the Kingdom should the great tribulation have in it no witnesses for the Lord and His grace. Reverently do I say it, to them there would be loss did not some go into the tribulation. God does make the wrath of man to praise

Him. And even these unfaithful ones will be made to praise Him in and through the great tribulation.

Should all the disciples of Jesus be taken up before the great tribulation the world would be without witnesses for Jesus. Then those who, we are told in Revelation, were won during the great tribulation would have been lost not only to themselves, but to the Lord and His Kingdom. God in His mercy has not only delayed the coming day of His wrath because He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (II Pet. 3:9) His great mercy and love have even provided that in the day of His wrath there might be some of the redeemed to testify to His saving love and grace and to point men to the coming Kingdom. It will be as in the days of Noah, that they will not only marry and be given in marriage, but will have witnesses to the coming Messiah.

X (The coming of Christ for His Bride is not the end of the world, nor even the end of this age.) It is but the beginning of the end. The Holy Spirit and the Spirit-controlled will no longer be here to hinder or mitigate the evils of godliness in a social order regulated by the Antichrist and used to express the wrath of Satan and the false prophet who serves in the power of the Beast. But we are told the Lord will never leave Himself without witness. This is true even in the great tribulation. Among these are found the disciples of Jesus in the members of the church who are not caught up. (Acts 14:17. Rev. 7:9, 11:3, 20:4)

The great tribulation will not only be a time of unexampled trouble but also of witnessing and evangelization.

Out from the great tribulation will come the Jewish remnant and a "great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." Of these many doubtless were won by the faithful witnessings of the believers in Jesus who were not ready when He came for His Bride and so did not "escape" from but were delivered by the great tribulation.

"It should be remembered," says Dr. C. I. Scofield, "that both the great tribulation and the age to come which the tribulation introduces, are periods during which the Gospel wins its greatest triumph in salvation. Out of the great tribulation comes the Jewish remnant which turns to Christ in that awful time, and "a great multitude, which no man could number, etc.—Gentiles who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb." We number converts easily enough now; in that awful time they become innumerable. (Rev. 7:4-10)

These, who at the coming of the Lord before the tribulation were not "accounted worthy to escape" its cleansing, proving fires, will be found worthy to stand before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple. For they were tried in the fires of the great tribulation on the earth without the presence of the Holy Spirit to comfort and ennoble them,

and they, being thus weighed, though found wanting in the beginning, became "worthy to suffer" for His sake.

"Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

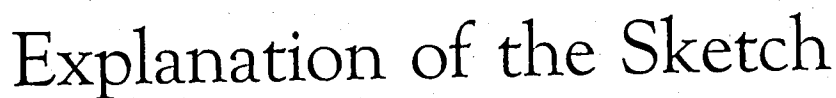
"For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Rev. 7:15-17)

Looking back over these reasons for the separation and regarding God's great mercy in the midst of wrath, we join with the apostle: "Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God." And with the much people in heaven and the angels and the great multitude we would join in rendering salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are His judgments.

The mere nominal professor, who has but the forms of godliness without the life, who knows not the Lord Himself, but is only part of organized Christendom or merely a church member, will go through the great tribulation. In this fact is his deliverance and opportunity.

But the true church, the Bride who is looking and waiting for her Lord, will not. These will be caught up to meet Him in the air, descending with Him to the earth as the tribulation gives place to the Millenium, so to be ever with the Lord. Even so, come Lord Jesus.

"Take heed to yourselves," said Jesus, "lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. 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."



8. Jesus seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven. Heb. 10:12, 13; Rev. 3:21.