

# The Great Tribulation

## The Church's Supreme Test

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## FOREWARD

Concerning the Lord's Coming, two main views are held: viz., Pre-Millennialism--the coming of Christ **before** the Millennium, and Post-Millennialism--the coming of Christ **after** the Millennium.

Also two main views are held concerning the catching up of the Church: viz., Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism--the taking away of the Church **before** the Tribulation, and Post-Tribulation-Rapturism--the Rapture of the Church **after** the Tribulation.

I am a Pre-Millennialist but a Post-Tribulation-Rapturist.<sup>1</sup>

So almost universally has the Pre-Tribulation-Rapture doctrine been held for the past seventy years that few seem to have thought it necessary to give it a specific name, other than "The Rapture"; but having, from the first of my acquaintance with it, taken strong issue with this popular belief, and noticing the growing rebellion against it with the consequent trend toward a return to "the old paths" of early Church belief on this subject, I am using these two phrases in order to distinguish clearly between the two views that differ so materially. Perhaps Pre-Tribulationism and Post-Tribulationism would answer as well or even better (certainly they would be less cumbersome), but until the issue represented by these terms is better understood, I shall use the longer terms because of the diminished possibility of misunderstanding their meaning.

### How I Became a Student of Prophecy

Perhaps a statement of how forty-five years ago I became interested in the Pre-Millennial Second Coming of Christ will not be out of order here, as it will help to make clear why I have never believed the popular, but decidedly modern, teaching of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture.

My attention had been called to the possibility of the redemption of the body as a present attainment by faith, and I had read the New Testament through carefully more than once to find what it had to say about this matter which, it seemed to me, was the logical conclusion of the doctrine of "Faith Healing", as it was called at that time (later it was named "Divine Healing"), but I had not associated this present possible redemption of the body teaching with the second coming of Christ, because having heard almost nothing but Post-Millennialism

1 There is much dissension among the Pre-Tribulation-Rapturists as to whether all living believers will be raptured before the Tribulation, or whether only the so-called "ready" saints will be "caught up to meet the Lord" at that time. One school teaches that "readiness" for the Rapture at the time of the "Parousia" of Christ, allegedly before the Tribulation, will be essential to participation in the Rapture; that all "unready" saints will be left behind to undergo some or all of the Tribulation judgments as a punishment for their unreadiness. I say, "some or all", because this school is divided and subdivided on the question as to whether these allegedly "unready" saints will be sufficiently purified by having endured a part of the Tribulation judgments to justify their rapture at some time or times during the Tribulation, or whether participation in all the Tribulation judgments will be necessary to accomplish their purification, and thus make them ready to meet the Lord when He descends to the earth at His "Apocalypse", allegedly at the end of the Tribulation. The other school teaches that because the Rapture is, as it alleges, "all of grace", necessarily all living believers will be raptured at the "Parousia" of the Lord, allegedly before the Tribulation, regardless of their readiness or unreadiness. This is only one example of the "confusion worse confounded" which exists among our Pre-Tribulation-Rapture friends. Other examples of this "confusion" will be mentioned and dealt with as we proceed.

theretofore, and very little of that, my information on and interest in the second coming of Christ were negligible. But an incident occurred which directed my attention to this subject.

While visiting a friend in the south of Ireland, I chanced upon a news item which told of a cattle fair held nearby at which no one was allowed to transact business unless he had the white card of membership in a certain association fastened in the front of his hat. Immediately I said, "That is odd. I believe I have read something like that in the Bible." At once I began to "search the Scriptures" for what I thought I had seen, and finally found it.

*"And he [the Antichrist] causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark." Rev. 13:16,17.*

So striking was the resemblance between this prophecy and what I had read in the newspaper, that I was impelled to look further into the matter. And another incident increased by interest.

### **Feared "Boycotting"**

The friend whom I was visiting was the treasurer of a certain company in that city. He and his wife occupied a suite of rooms over the company's offices. One day the wife informed me that her husband was greatly worried because an official of the company had told him he must ask me to leave, as it was being rumored in the town that I held extreme religious and political views, and it was feared that on this account a boycott might be declared against me which would include those who befriended me, and might include the offices of the company, and, of course, its business. I knew the fear was not entirely groundless, for while I was not interested in politics, therefore was taking no part in them, yet such was the nervous condition of many of the people there because of some boycotts which had occurred, that a mere whisper or suggestion would be sufficient to involve myself and my friends, and perhaps others, in a boycott of possible far-reaching results. And a boycott there and then was no small thing. I knew that my friend's hospitable soul rebelled against this demand of his superior, hence his worry, for he was torn between his hospitality to me and his loyalty to the company. Also he was in no position to refuse the demand. So I left and occupied a rented room in another part of the town during the remaining thirteen weeks of my stay.

### **The Origin of "Boycotting"**

The word [boycott] was first used in Ireland, and was derived from the name of Captain Cunningham Boycott (1832-1897) agent for the estates of the Earl of Erne in County Mayo. For refusing in 1880 [five years before the time of which I am writing] to receive rent at figures fixed by the tenants, Captain Boycott's life was threatened, his servants were compelled to leave him, his fences torn down, his letters intercepted, and his food supplies interfered with. It took a force of 900 soldiers to protect the Ulster Orangemen who succeeded finally in getting in his crops."

The foregoing, taken from the fourteenth edition of The Encyclopædia Britannica, but feebly describes the perilous position in which Captain Boycott found himself. From this incident, "Boycotting" received its name; and it spread rapidly until it had encircled the globe, for its effectiveness as a weapon of

intimidation had been fully demonstrated.

### Some "Boycotting" Incidents

In those days frightful atrocities were committed almost daily against boycotted persons, and even their animals were not immune to savage attack. A couple of incidents will serve to show the temper of the people there at that time.

Walking on the beach at Youghal with friends, we saw a boy riding a mule which had a long gash in its side. The lad told us that his family was boycotted, and as one of their unfriendly acts the boycotters had invaded their pasture and slashed the mule. If a tenth of the stories that reached me of attacks upon animals were true, that mule was fortunate to have escaped with so little harm.

Changing trains one day at Kilkenny, en route from Dublin to Waterford, I saw a wealthy woman leave a "first class" compartment of a train. From a "third class" compartment stepped two men of the Royal Irish Constabulary. The lady mounted a "jaunting car". The two constables took their seats on a car behind and the little cavalcade moved on; the policemen with loaded rifles ready for instant use. A local man informed me that the lady, a resident landholder, was under a boycott, so was guarded at all times by the police, for without an armed escort she would undoubtedly be shot.

### An Unbiased Student of the Scriptures

Greatly impressed by what I had discovered in The Revelation and its similarity to what was occurring around me, I read the New Testament again for further prophetic teaching. On this subject my mind was "virgin soil". I had no theories about the Lord's coming, hence was at liberty to accept what I read without bias. Thus without previous teaching to the effect that the Lord would come **for** His saints **before** the Tribulation and **with** them **after** it to influence my judgment, I learned what is herein set forth, viz., that the Church will be in the Tribulation, **not as a punishment but as a privilege**; which Tribulation will be terminated by the coming of Christ to resurrect His sleeping saints and to catch them up, with their living companions, to meet Him in the air; and then, without pause, to accompany Him to the Mount of Olives, to be eye-witnesses of and probably participants in the events that will follow.

Not until many months after did I learn that this was contrary to the popular doctrine concerning the **time** of the Rapture, and when I did learn this fact the battle was on, for immediately I challenged that doctrine, and the more I discussed it the more certain I felt that under my feet was the solid rock of God's eternal Word.

Nor did I learn for several years that without exception the early Church held the doctrine I was presenting, and that not until about 1830 was Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism ever heard of.

## PREFACE

Several of these chapters appeared in The Standard Bearer, our monthly paper, from October, 1915, to July, 1916, inclusive under the title, "Will the Church Pass Through the Great Tribulation?" Many times I was asked to reprint them, either in the paper or in book form, or both, and at last decided to do so in both. Beginning April, 1926, the subject was again presented in The Standard Bearer, as I wanted the questions, suggestions, and criticisms of my readers before putting the matter into book form.

Not only were many questions asked, suggestions offered, and criticisms presented (which indicated a great interest in the subject), but several readers called my attention to books and pamphlets dealing with it--pro and con--of which I had never before heard. I succeeded in obtaining copies of all these and read them carefully. From some of those favoring this subject I obtained an occasional new thought, but they were principally helpful to me because of their corroboration of what I had discovered by independent thought while reading the Scriptures only. Naturally I was glad to find that others had arrived at the same conclusions on this decidedly unpopular subject, for, like Elijah, in his fight against the dangerous doctrines and false leaders that had led Israel astray, I felt somewhat alone in this fight against what I shall show later is a decidedly modern, dangerous, and flesh-pleasing doctrine, so was glad to learn that the Lord has His "seven thousand" more or less hidden ones who have not bowed the knee to the Baal of Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism. 1 Kings 19.

Not that I had ever sat down discouraged "under a juniper tree" and prayed for death, or hidden in "a cave" for fear of enemies. Instead, inspired by the experiences of a host of Bible saints, I had determined by the help and grace of God to use every power I possessed to combat this delusive doctrine, even if I were the only one to do so and should never succeed in securing a convert to this "faith of our fathers" regarding the time of the Rapture.

Some of the new thoughts and corroborative statements thus discovered I was able to weave into the articles as they were written for The Standard Bearer, sometimes in the body of the articles, occasionally as footnotes or Addenda. Others had to be put in in a similar manner after the articles had been printed in the paper. As the doing of this covered a period of several years, during which time I read and wrote under great difficulties, the reader may discover many defects in these volumes but will understand why they are there. Later I may have time and opportunity to correct these. To this end I invite suggestions along this line also.

### Why Several Volumes?

I had expected to get all I had to say on this subject into one small volume, but this additional and principally corroborative matter dispelled that idea. However, it was not until I had read certain pamphlets and books by well-known and popular writers on the other side that I came to see that I must write regardless of space, for if possible these writers must be met and routed. I sensed the fact that it would not be sufficient merely to present my view in support of Post-Tribulation-Rapturism, for to do only that might result in some readers remarking, "Well, that is only your way of looking at these Scriptures, and the other man has the right to take the opposite view of them." So I felt I must carry the war into the enemy's country (beard the lion in his den, so to speak), and, if possible,

defeat him on his own territory. To do this, I must present in the very words of these writers their often positively absurd ideas; ideas so absurd that merely to state that these men held them, and then bring my guns to bear on them, would have been to lay myself open to challenge by sensible people whose intellects are not under the control of that deceptive doctrine; for such people could not and would not, on my bare assertion, believe that these rank absurdities are or have been held by men whose very names, in other connections, have become synonymous with great intelligence. This explains why, after presenting my argument in favor of Post-Tribulation-Rapturism, I take up far more space in presenting my replies to these popular Pre-Tribulation-Rapture writers.

### **Wish Better Qualified Men Had Undertaken the Task**

It seems to me regrettable that the scholarly Post-Tribulation-Rapturist, Dr. Nathaniel West (of whom more later), did not have his "scathing" articles on Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism (referred to later by his friend, Rev. Robert Cameron), preserved in book form, for such a book might have proved very helpful in the fight against this latter-day delusion.

Also it seems to me equally regrettable that the perhaps still more scholarly Post-Tribulation-Rapturist, S. P. Tregelles, did not write at greater length on the subject. Following are the reasons he gives for not having done so:

When a point has been established by full proof from Holy Scripture, it is often impossible, and in general needless, to meet each objection or difficulty which may be raised. It is often impossible, because all the modes in which different objectors will find difficulties may be unknown to those who rest on the simple warrants of the Word of God. It is commonly needless, because when we have to do with those who are subject to the authority of God in His Word, full Scripture proof of a point is enough; and also it is felt that the varying grounds taken by objectors, and their contradictions of Scripture, show that they are striving (even though at times unconsciously) against truths which cannot be overthrown.

Thus, if we have to establish the Deity of Christ, we bring forward the direct proofs, the distinct statements that He is God over all, blessed for ever, and that He is the Creator, Sustainer, and essentially the Lord of all. We do not think it needful to enquire into every cavil of every objector, and to discuss these one by one, before we regard the point as proved. We do not pretend to meet what may be called the difficulties of the case: indeed, we do wisely not to imagine that we can overcome the prejudice which is proof against the distinct words of inspired prophets and apostles. We have, as well as we are enabled, to state the revealed truth; and then its application can be made with efficacious power by the secret working of the Holy Ghost.

Although reference has been made to particular objections, to discuss them in detail has not been attempted. The reasons just stated will suffice for this: answers have been given to some of the ways in which the Scriptures cited have been set aside; but beyond this it is impossible to go without an extensive enquiry into the various modes in which advocates of the Secret Coming and Secret Rapture seek to make the theory plausible. It would be as much to the purpose to discuss all that has been written against the truth that "we are justified freely by the grace of God, for the sake of Christ's merits, through faith", before firmly and definitely setting forth the Gospel. All the grounds of objection to the hope of Christ's people being His glorious appearing, to which I refer, are such as **really** have been relied on. I do not discuss mere surmises; I notice a few points for the help (as I trust) of some; but I do not charge any one with holding anything which he rejects: different maintainers of the Secret Rapture have taken different grounds. (*The Hope of Christ's Second Coming*.)

It is true, as Dr. Tregelles says, that it is hopeless to attempt to discuss all the vagaries of Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism, but I felt that I must discuss as many of them as possible.

In his small book, Dr. Tregelles confines himself almost entirely to the presentation of "positive proof"; that is to say, to the simple and direct statement of the Biblical doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ and related events. And this "positive proof" may be enough--for some. But I feel that many others can be helped by the presentation of what perhaps I may term "negative proof"; that is to say, by the exposure of as many Pre-Tribulation-Rapture fallacies as may come to my attention.

With Dr. Tregelles I would say, "I do not charge any one with holding anything which he rejects: different maintainers of the Secret Rapture have taken different grounds." But I do say, and I shall prove it from the writings of their own teachers, that every ridiculous idea dealt with in these volumes is held by some branch of the Pre-Tribulation-Rapturists, and that, therefore, every one of them is chargeable to Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism itself.

### Must Cater to Slow Minds

Some will think I should have been more brief, in places, and I could have been; but many years of speaking on Bible subjects has taught me the necessity of explaining at considerable length and of repeating often. Frequently in my classes I find both men and women who get my idea clearly before it is half expressed, and I am glad to deal with such. But more often I find that after I have painstakingly gone into a subject in almost minute detail, there are several who must be told over and over again what is meant. These are fine folk, but their minds work slowly, and because they are fine I never weary of helping them; and I adapt my talks to these, not to those of quick mentalities, for if I can get these to understand clearly there is no question about the others getting things straight. True, the quick ones are bored, often, but what of that? Better that they should be bored than that the others should be neglected. Many things in these volumes, which some will think might have been left to the reader's imagination, have been minutely dealt with, because after several of these articles had been printed in The Standard Bearer in briefer form, letters came from readers, who perhaps and apparently lacked the necessary imagination, asking for further details, which details were furnished by letters and afterward incorporated in the articles. After this had occurred a few times, I decided to leave as little as possible to the imagination.

### Two Aspects of the Tribulation

During the study of this subject, it is of extreme importance that the two aspects of the Great Tribulation be kept clearly in mind, namely, the **world-judging** and the **saint-persecuting**. The former is of God, is a punishment, and no true saint need suffer from it; the latter is of Satan, is a privilege, and every true saint will receive his share of it. This will be dealt with at greater length later. Failure to make this distinction has resulted in great confusion, the general teaching being that for one to be found in the Great Tribulation will in itself be evidence that he is out of the Divine order because of spiritual failure. But the presence in it of the faithful "two witnesses", Rev. 11, and the "hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel", who are said to be "sealed" because they are "servants of our God", Rev. 7, indicates this

is not true.

Let it be carefully noted here that these "hundred and forty and four thousand" faithful servants of God are sealed as such, not after they have endured enough of the Tribulation judgments to prove their fidelity, **but before the Tribulation judgments begin**, for in a parenthetical statement John says,

*"And I saw another angel...having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God." Rev. 7:1-3.*

If God will permit this faithful Israelitish "remnant" to remain in the Tribulation, **for His glory and their blessing**, why should He not also let faithful Gentiles remain in it for the same reason?<sup>2</sup>

### Questions and Criticism Invited

Not a few letters have come to my desk from Pre-Tribulation-Rapturists who have come across passages of Scripture which they could not harmonize with their belief, and, being too honest to attempt to force them to fit a doctrine which undoubtedly they contradict, these have written me for information. My replies have necessarily been brief, but now such enquirers will be able to get in full the reasons for my belief.

Should any part of this subject still be obscure to them, I shall do my best to answer further questions.

Should others think they have good reasons for disagreeing with anything set forth in this series of articles, I hope they will give me the opportunity to examine their reasons, which I promise to do to the best of my ability and in a kind and brotherly way. If their reasons compel me to modify or even materially change anything I have set forth, this will be gladly done, for I am a seeker after truth.

But let no one make the mistake which a dear old friend of mind made. His letter was very brief. "I reject your doctrine", he wrote. To which I replied, "Only fools say 'I reject', without giving reasons for rejecting. Wise men tell why they reject." He refused to give his reasons and went to his grave rejecting. This was regrettable, for we agreed so nicely on practically all other doctrines and enjoyed talking them over together. But this matter he would not discuss with me. What for so many years he had believed was good enough for him to continue to believe. Is it to be wondered at that I concluded he doubted his ability to defend his own doctrine? I fear he was one of those who learn Pre-Tribulation-Rapture just as a parrot learns to say "Polly wants a cracker", and who can no more discuss the matter than the parrot can give reasons why one should give her the cracker she asks for. In other words, they accept certain "stock arguments" and "stock texts" without testing the arguments by the Scriptures and without attempting to discover whether the texts quoted are properly connected with their contexts. Therefore, when challenged they are likely to fall back upon the "I decline to discuss" or the "I reject" position, either of which positions any intelligent man should be ashamed to occupy.

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<sup>2</sup> This thought is dealt with at greater length elsewhere in these volumes. See especially "Tribulation, a Punishment for the Sinner, but a Privilege for the Saint", and "The Alleged Enoch and Noah Type".

## THE RIGHT AND THE WRONG WAY TO APPROACH THIS SUBJECT

As stated in the "Foreword", when I began to study the prophetic Scriptures, my mind was "virgin soil". That is to say, I knew nothing about prophecy, therefore had neither bias nor prejudice to influence my study, so it was easy for me to accept whatever I found in the Book on this subject. I had no opportunities to hear speakers on prophecy, and I was too poor to purchase books on prophecy until long after I had discovered what I have set forth in these volumes; for which fact I am now profoundly grateful, for if I had been able to hear many Pre-Tribulation-Rapture speakers or to read many, perhaps any, of the books on prophecy which contained the Pre-Tribulation-Rapture teaching, I might have been greatly hindered in my investigation, for it would have seemed to me presumptuous for one as young and illiterate and as unlearned in prophecy as I was to question what older and educated men were saying about the time of the Rapture. When at last opportunities presented themselves for me to hear prophetic speakers and to read books on prophecy, I had become sufficiently informed on Post-Tribulation-Rapturism to be able to "give a reason" for my belief, and carefully to examine the alleged proofs of Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism.

I think it likely that not many into whose hands this book may fall will be as fortunately situated as I was in this respect; for whereas in those days speakers and writers on prophecy were "few and far between" (consequently comparatively few had heard the one or read the other), today speakers, books and tracts on prophecy are "as numberless as the sands on the seashore", with the result that perhaps almost all Christians have often heard addresses on prophecy and read much literature on the subject. And as with rare exceptions these speakers and this literature set forth with much assurance the Pre-Tribulation-Rapture doctrine, never so much as hinting that it ever has been questioned, it naturally follows that the hearers and readers have become somewhat "rooted and grounded" in their belief in it, so will find it rather difficult to give this opposing doctrine an unbiased and unprejudiced examination, and still more difficult to reverse themselves on it. The purpose of this chapter is to assist all such to approach the subject in the right way.

### How to Come to the Book

Only a short while ago I learned that S. D. ("Quiet Talks") Gordon holds the Post-Tribulation-Rapture doctrine. Brother Gordon does not particularly stress this point, but he says enough about it to make it clear where he stands, and in his own inimitable style he shows the right way to approach this or any other subject.

We want to come to this Book to find out just what it teaches. There is another way of coming to this Book. It is a common way, and a most difficult way to avoid taking. We are so constantly tempted to take it, and may be so accustomed to taking it, that I want to put up a good plain signpost of "Beware" over it. It is the habit of going to the Book to find proofs of what we believe. And it is surprising how, if you are not particular about the connection of words in Scripture--and users of this way usually are not--how you can find something, a phrase, a verse, that seems the very thing you need to prove your point.

Our friends who, honestly enough, use this way should remember that it was the way used by the Tempter in the wilderness in trying to turn the Lord aside from the

right. The evil one is a very skillful partial-quoter of Scripture, and has an astonishingly large following, doubtless an unconscious following, among earnest, godly people.

There lived a dear old saint of God in Wurtemberg many years ago, who was scholar and philosopher as well as saint. That part of Germany is even yet fragrant with the sweet odor of his name. And all the Western Church is under tribute to John Albert Bengel for his Christliness as well as his scholarship.

Bengel had three most remarkable rules for Bible study. They are like John's Gospel in one regard, simple as a child's speech in form, but deep as the Pacific in meaning.

The first rule was: "Get everything out of the Bible." That is to say, let it be the teacher. Get your beliefs and information, not from books, but only and wholly from this Book. Do not come to prove your theory but to prove what is truth. That's a hard rule to follow; should I say that it is rarely used?

The second rule was: "Read nothing into the Bible." That is a rule yet harder to follow. Maybe it can't be followed fully. Everybody has some bias or prejudice. It's all the stronger when we don't know it's there, as is so often the case. There needs to be a strong purpose and constant practice and much prayer and deep humility of spirit to follow this second rule. Yet only so can one get to the real truth.

The third rule is as simple and calls for hard work: "Let nothing remain concealed in the Book." I am quoting these rules freely from memory.

The first rule makes the result dependable, as being indeed true. The second rule makes it accurate. The third rule makes it fully rounded, avoiding partial or half-views, which are so easily gotten hold of. ("Quiet Talks About Our Lord's Return".)

### **Was This Cowardice?**

The attitude of a ministerial acquaintance of mine is a sample of an attitude which I have found all too prevalent.

This friend having made a call on me, I explained my absence from one of his recent Bible studies thus: "Although I wanted to hear your address on the alleged Pre-Tribulation Rapture, I decided to stay away because I feared to embarrass you by my presence, as you know my opposition to that doctrine. My absence left you free to present your side of the subject to an audience pre-disposed to agree with you."

Then, as I happened to be at work on the subject and had the typescript at hand, I intimated that it would give me pleasure to discuss the matter with him privately, in a brotherly way.

With that I quoted a passage I had been dealing with and called his attention to its evident meaning when fairly considered. Apparently unable to combat the view presented from it, he said, "But that is only one passage dealing with the subject." "True", I replied, "but I have them all here and would like to take them all up with you." Quickly he said, "But you must not systematize the Scriptures in that way." Amazed, I answered, "Do you mean to say that it is wrong to bring together all the Scriptures bearing upon a given subject and consider them both individually and collectively?" His silence indicated that such was his meaning, yet I knew that to support any doctrine which he believed, and which he knew could be helped by such a procedure, he would do the very thing I was doing.

Seeing his evident reluctance to discuss the matter, in spite of the assurance with which he had publicly presented his side of the question a few nights before, I dropped the matter; for one of my rules is never to force a subject upon anyone, except in self-defense.

As the brother was leaving, returning momentarily to the subject, he remarked, "I want to know the truth". Perhaps it is not to be wondered at, in view of his decided unwillingness to discuss the matter with one who from experience he knew would talk to him as kindly as frankly about it, that I felt what he really meant was that he wanted to be left to the enjoyment of his own ideas on the subject. And in this he is but a representative of millions. Some day they will have a sad awakening.

### **An Amazing Letter**

In some respects the most remarkable letter that has yet reached me concerning this subject is one from a brother who occupies an important position in the "Pentecostal" or "Tongues" movement; a man whose friendship I prize highly, and for whom, apart from this expression of his attitude in this matter, I have great respect. The capitals in the following excerpts from his letter are mine, also the numbering of paragraphs.

(1) I have just picked up the December Standard Bearer. I notice that the first page article is now Chapter Seven. I was aware that you had been running this quite a while,...but I have never read any of them until this one I lightly scanned through. I see that you speak of people who believe in the Rapture before the Tribulation putting certain Scriptures aside as only for the Jews. I had not heard of that before. I have listened to Pentecost preachers for years preaching the Rapture before the Tribulation and I never heard any one of them speak of any Scripture as not applying to the Christians. That is a thing that Scofield does, and one of the very things that makes us unwilling to advertise his Bible in "The Pentecostal Evangel".

(2) But why do you spend so much time on it? I WILL NOT READ IT. IT IS COMFORTABLE TO BELIEVE THAT WE SHALL BE RAPTURED BEFORE THE TRIBULATION...It is a matter that is of no moral or practical value, therefore WHY SHOULD I GIVE TIME TO MAKE SURE I AM RIGHT?

(3) I have great respect for your piety and also for your unusual erudition, and when you have a theme THAT IS IMPORTANT I am delighted to read. I know if I should read your articles I would very likely be convinced that my present ideas are wrong....You are a master at gathering thing together to make your point....

(4) I would not be benefitted in any degree that I can see by such a change of views, and I would be thrown out of harmony with my mates. A heretic is one who teaches things calculated to cause schism. Conceivably a man might be a heretic in that he taught the truth...Without regard to whether your contention is right or wrong it would be heresy for me to teach it. Heresy is a bad thing.

With much love and great appreciation of your piety and attainments, I am, as ever,

Yours affectionately,

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(5) By the way, the assumption made by you that the Irvingite woman who had the prophecy to the effect that the Rapture would precede the Tribulation was of the devil, seems to me to be gratuitous. It must in order to be allowable take for

granted that the point at issue has been proven--at least that, perhaps more than that.

Having read the above, I gasped, then wrote the brother as follows:

Your letter is unworthy of you. If I reply to it at all, it may be publicly. It is the worst letter of its kind I have yet received, and it is a complete "give away" of the position I am combating. Thus it may prove useful to me.

Now for some comments on that letter.

### **Every Pre-Tribulation Rapturist Must Make Some Use of "The Jewish Wastepaper Basket"**

**Paragraph 1.** The brother says that, unlike Scofield and his school, the "Pentecostal" people do not throw any of these Scriptures into the Jewish Wastepaper Basket, but make every one of them applicable to Christians.

We have to look at but one passage of Scripture to see clearly that this is not true.

*"IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE TRIBULATION of those days...shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven:...and He shall send His angels with a GREAT SOUND OF A TRUMPET, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds....Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left."* Matt. 24:29-41.

Make the "elect" of this Scripture to mean Christian believers, and the "trumpet" to be the trumpet mentioned by Paul in 1 Cor. 15:52 and 1 Thes. 4:16, and the passage becomes absolutely fatal to Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism, since it declares that the Rapture here referred to will occur "**immediately after the tribulation**", not **before** it. Hence this brother, like **all** Pre-Tribulation-Rapturists, whether or not of the Scofield school, **must**, like Scofield, throw this statement of Jesus into the Jewish Wastepaper Basket, or be defeated by the first Post-Tribulation-Rapturist with whom he may find it necessary to discuss this subject.

All who say the "elect" mentioned here are Christian believers and the "trumpet" referred to is "the last trump" of 1 Cor. 15:52, "the trump of God" of 1 Thes. 4:16, and the "seventh" trumpet of Rev. 11:15, necessarily are **Post-Tribulation-Rapturists**.

Since, because of its great importance, this Scripture will be dealt with later at considerable length, I shall say no more about it here.

### **Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism Preferred Because it is "Comfortable"**

**Paragraph 2.** "I will not read it. It is comfortable to believe that we shall be Raptured before the Tribulation. Why should I give time to make sure I am right?"

No sooner had I started to tell what I had found in the Scriptures on Post-

Tribulation Rapturism, than I ran full tilt into this thing. My teaching made people **uncomfortable**. They wanted a crown without a cross, a victory without a battle, a reward without a task.

Said one sister to me, when I had stressed the need of works to evidence the genuineness of faith, as James and Paul did (James 2:14-26; Romans 3:31; 8:4), "I would rather hear Brother T-- preach than listen to you, because he always tells us what God will do for us whereas you persist in telling us what we must do for God." It was because faith was being over-emphasized at the expense of works, which were conspicuous by their absence, that I preached in that place as I did, making myself a "wet blanket" on their theretofore happy (?) testimony meetings. Time, the inexorable one, proved me right.

What that sister said about the "Faith **and** Works" preaching, because it made her uncomfortable, this brother says in effect about the Post-Tribulation-Rapture teaching.

One correspondent put it a little stronger than he expresses it. "Your Post-Tribulation-Rapture teaching terrifies me", he wrote.

What is it that is made uncomfortable or that is terrified by any truth of God but the "weak", cowardly "flesh"? The cross, the battle, the task are always objectionable to "the flesh" but never to "the spirit". Hence the words of Jesus in Gethsemane to His disciples who were avoiding the discomfort of watching with Him in His hour of supreme need: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Matt. 26:41. To this subject I shall refer again later at greater length.

The trend of the brother's entire letter shows that in this matter he prefers "the line of least resistance". In this he is like unto the vast majority. Dead fish follow this line, for they drift with the current. But they are to be excused, even pitied, for they are dead, therefore helpless. Live fish, unless sick, take the other course.

God pity those who because they want to be comfortable refuse to investigate. Why should one prefer to live in "A Fool's Paradise"?

When the leaders (this brother is one, a prominent one) take this stand, what hope is there for the people? Verily it is again true, "The leaders of this people cause them to err." Isaiah 9:16. Like a sad refrain, this thought runs right through the Book; and history is ever repeating itself.

One thing about this part of the brother's letter commends itself to me. He puts into words what many think but will not say.

### **Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism or Post-Tribulation Rapturism? An Important Present-day Problem**

**Paragraph 3.** The brother thinks this doctrine is not important enough to merit examination. This might have been said many years ago with some show of reason, but in these days, when "end things" are so rapidly developing, there is nothing in the "latter day" prophetic Scriptures that is not of vast importance, and this subject is as important as any, and more important than most.

In an article on the "Pre-Tribulation Rapture", to which I shall reply later, W. E. Blackstone, author of "Jesus Is Coming", says, "Shall the Church escape the

Tribulation or must we pass through it? **This is an infinitely important question.**" And every one who will give this matter serious thought will agree with Mr. Blackstone in this, as I do, even while I expose the weakness or absurdity of his Pre-Tribulation Rapture arguments.

In the same paragraph the brother says that I am "a master at gathering things together" to make my point. He may be stating a fact, but whether under the circumstances his words are to be taken as a compliment or the reverse is a question.

How are we to get at Biblical truth except by "gathering together" everything touching on a certain subject, if that be possible, and then, by means of the whole, reaching a conclusion? That is what I am attempting in these volumes, and because I have been so anxious to do this, I have taken the risk of criticism for prolixity. What does this brother, and those like him, want? A mutilated, an emasculated Word? Let him and them go to the Modernists for it. These Fundamentalist Pre-Tribulation-Rapturists boast of accepting the Bible "from cover to cover", but on the subject of the Rapture they want from it only what, by a mere superficial examination, seems to confirm their pet doctrine and thus make them "comfortable". A serious charge to make, I know; but the facts justify it.

#### **Prefers Error With Fellowship To Truth With Ostracism**

**Paragraph 4.** What an amazing statement! He would rather teach a lie and remain in fellowship with his "mates" than teach a truth and run counter to them! Not so would Jesus. Had the Lord followed that course He would not have been crucified as a trouble maker. So would not Peter and Paul or any other real warrior for God in any age or in any place. Fortunately, I know this brother to be a much finer man than his letter would indicate; one who, if once convinced of the seriousness of the matter, would stand firm for what he believed about it.

Says the brother: "Heresy [even if it be God's truth, mark you!] is bad." What bad men Luther, Wesley, Fox and a host of others were!

In writing as he did, the brother condemned tens of thousands of his Pentecostal brethren, for it is doubtful if any movement has caused more people in so short a time to get out of touch with their "mates" than has the "Tongues" movement; for the Pentecostalists are nothing if not aggressive in the presentation of their views. Judged by this test they are, almost all, heretics of the worst kind. They claim to have discovered a long-neglected Bible truth and believe they should zealously proclaim it, let the consequences be what they may. And this they do in every part of the world, to the serious disruption of denominational work in the foreign mission field as well as in the various homelands. This is as it should be, if what they teach really is true. But why condemn Post-Tribulation-Rapturists for doing what the Pentecostalists do?

I thank God that once convinced I am right, and that my opponents cannot meet me in fair debate, I never hesitate, when necessary, to be a heretic and preach what I believe, even though it is "calculated to cause schism".

Once upon a time it was charged against me that I split a meeting. When I asked, "Which side stood by me?" the answer was, "Our best people." I smiled and let it go at that. The same thing has happened several times since.

I do not say that I would unduly stress this or any other Biblical truth anywhere or at any time. On the contrary, occasionally I refuse to take up some Biblical subjects, this among them, because I do not want to cause trouble. But when occasion seems to require my presenting any Biblical doctrine, I take it up, no matter though it bring ostracism from every friend, blows from every foe, the opposition of all hell, and split a religious gathering in two. Yea, if under such circumstances "an angel from heaven" bade me desist, I would challenge his right to do so. Gal. 1:8. Prove me wrong and I will retract. Until then I dare not refrain when occasion seems to require speech. Some of my over-zealous friends have even accused me of cowardice, because I have remained silent when they thought I should have spoken. But I have to give account to God, not to man.

**Paragraph 5.** Naturally, being a Pentecostal man, the brother takes exception to my assumption that the Irvingite woman who was responsible for the introduction of Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism about 1830, after the Church had believed and taught Post-Tribulation-Rapturism for eighteen centuries, was deceived by the devil, and that her associates were deceived by him through her. I refer my fair-minded readers to the chapter on "The Origin of Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism" for proof that this woman **was** indeed deceived by the devil as "an angel of light"; and since that is true, necessarily all who have since accepted the doctrine which grew out of that alleged "Spirit message" have been similarly deceived.

About five years after that letter was received, there appeared in the Pentecostal weekly paper with which this brother is connected a sermon by the Rev. Donald Gee, in which Brother Gee, a most estimable and godly man, commented on the fact, as he alleged and as I can well believe, that Post-Tribulation-Rapturism was then causing considerable discussion and creating some dissension in Pentecostal circles. As Brother Gee seemed inclined to blame our teaching for this discussion and dissension, I shall reply to him in a later volume under the heading, "Who Is Responsible for the Splits?"

Also, and probably as a result of this discussion and dissension, the Rev. J. Narver Gortner, a man with whom I am acquainted and whom I esteem highly, and one of the best Bible students in the Pentecostal work, issued a pamphlet, "Are the Saints Scheduled to Go Through the Tribulation?", to which also I shall reply, D.V., in a later volume.

## "MOB PSYCHOLOGY" AN AID TO PRE-TRIBULATION-RAPTURISM

I had been listening to a lecture by Norman Angell, the noted English essayist, on "Ideas that Assassinate" in which he related this incident:

He was on the platform of a large hall in England during what was to have been a discussion of national problems by representatives of the two principal political parties of Great Britain who were seeking election to Parliament. The World War had recently ended, and the so-called "Hymn of Hate" of Germany had aroused no more bitterness among that people against their enemies than certain speeches by some of Great Britain's alleged leaders had begotten in the hearts of her citizens.

The first speaker was a far-sighted statesman. As he proceeded with his address, counseling moderation in dealing with the defeated foe, giving as one of his reasons the economic harm to the victors as well as to the vanquished that would result from the carrying out of certain suggested policies, the audience grew restless. He was trying to make them think, and this they did not want to do. But the speaker persisted. More and more restless grew the audience, and suddenly a man sprang to his feet and shouted, "We don't want to hear any more about that. What we want to know is, are you in favor of hanging the Kaiser, of punishing the bloody Germans, and of making them pay all the cost of the war? Yes or no?" Instantly the mob--for that is all it was--began in a sing-song way to repeat, "Yes or no? Yes or no? Yes or no?" effectually preventing the speaker from continuing his address.

The other speaker was what we call "a practical politician"--that bane of all countries, no matter by what name called. He had no far-sighted, constructive policy as had his opponent. He cared little for the welfare of mankind in general, or of his own nation in particular. What he wanted was a seat in Parliament. Taking his cue from the attitude of the audience, his entire talk consisted of a rehash of all the silly "war lies" that had been circulated about the Germans--a part of the vile "war propaganda" of all the nations engaged in that Titanic struggle, our own nation, to its shame, not excepted. Loud cheers greeted his almost every statement, and when he closed with the declaration that he was in favor of carrying out the will of the people as it had been expressed by the questioner--"the people" whose voice is so often declared to be "the voice of God", but which is far more often the voice of the devil--the audience went wild, and that man's election was assured. Bitter have been the results of so many men of that type having had the handling of British affairs during those critical reconstruction days, as that nation has discovered and is still discovering. Infinitely better if the constructive thinkers could have had a careful hearing. But such men have to wait, usually until the mischievous policies of the other class have produced a bad harvest. Then they are called in to try to undo the harm that has been done because they were thrust aside for more popular men and measures.

That was "mob psychology" in connection with political affairs.

Arriving home I picked up a copy of The Sunday School Times, an excellent and valuable paper, one with which I seldom disagree. Among the stories used to illustrate the Easter Lesson was this:

**The Bolshevist's "Triumph".** "He is risen: He is not here." Verse 6. In a large public assembly hall in Moscow a public lecture was given by Comrade Lunatscharsky, the Bolshevist Commissary for Popular Education, attacking the "obsolete faith". This faith, he said, was a product of the capitalist class, but was now completely overthrown; its nullity was easy to prove. The address seemed successful, and the lecturer was so pleased with his own eloquence that, feeling complete confidence in himself, he brought it to an end by inviting a discussion of this theme, but with the stipulation that no speaker was to occupy more than five minutes. Anyone who wished to address the meeting was to give his name. There came forward a young priest with a close-cropped beard, of homely appearance, shy and awkward--a typical village priest. Lunatscharsky looked down at him scornfully. "Remember, not more than five minutes." "Yes, certainly. I shall not take long." The priest then mounted the platform, turned to the audience, and said, "Brothers and sisters, Christos Woskresse! (Christ is risen!)" This was the solemn Easter greeting exchanged by all on Easter night. As one man the great audience answered, "Woistinu Woskresse! (Verily He is risen!)" Turning to Lunatscharsky the young priest said, "I have finished. I have no more to say." The meeting was at once closed. All Comrade Lunatscharsky's flowery eloquence availed him nothing.--From "The Record", Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Prize Illustration.

As I laid the paper down I asked, What is the difference between "mob psychology" in connection with religion and "mob psychology" in connection with politics? Are they not equally regrettable because equally mischievous? And I could feel no more sympathy with the parrot-like cry of those Russian religionists than I could with the equally parrot-like cries of those British electors.

In both cases, the mob from childhood had followed "the line of least resistance" in matters requiring thought, by swallowing what their leaders fed them. And both mobs had responded, not to men who were trying to think things out, but to men who knew how to use "mob psychology" to accomplish their ends; a cowardly, contemptible, yea, a dastardly and damnable thing to do, no matter if one was a priest and the other a politician.

All such priests and politicians should be compelled to do manual work; and in their places should be put--for the good of mankind, politically and spiritually--constructive thinkers who can teach the people how to reason things out for themselves and so be prepared, as far as possible, to give an answer to every man who asks them questions.

Of course, I believe that "Christ is risen", but I say that a company of believers in His resurrection should be ready to give their sceptical opponents something better than a mob yell in answer to their criticisms on the faith. To my mind, the priestly creedist was not nearly so commendable as was the arguing atheist, for the latter **was** trying to make the people think; and careful thought tends to show that the resurrection of Christ is one of the best attested facts in history.

Not long after the foregoing was written, I clipped the following from "The Dayton Herald":

NEW HAVEN, Conn., April 15, [1931?]--(UP)--Popular desires are "no criteria to the real need", President Hoover informed Yale students today in an article written for the Yale News and published with official sanction.

Discussing the psychology of leadership and crowds, the president concludes that popular desires "can be determined only by deliberative consideration, by education, by constructive leadership".

"Human leadership", says President Hoover's article, "cannot be replenished by selection like queen bees, by divine right, or bureaucracies, but by the free rise of ability, character and intelligence.

The crowd "consumes, it hates, and it dreams, but it never builds", says the article. "The mob functions only in the world of emotion."

Demagogues, he explained, feed on mob emotions and their leadership is therefore the leadership of emotions, not the leadership of intellect and progress.

And this by Arthur Brisbane, the noted columnist, clipped from the same paper June 27, 1933.

The late Professor Shaler, who taught geology at Harvard, wrote a book on the mob, telling the difference between individuals acting separately and in mob formation. He declared that a group of clergymen, under the right mob influence, might be started on a lynching expedition.

News comes from Germany that the most rampant, radical, communistic "red" groups of workers in Germany are now enthusiastic Nazis, eager to put on their brown shirts and march under Hitler's orders. Men believe that they think for themselves, but, like wolves, what they want is a leader of the pack.

There is much "mob psychology" in Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism. Ever I am discovering that its advocates are short on facts and long on slogans and phrases. But snappy slogans and smart phrases prove nothing. Usually they are devised to prevent thought.

I can conceive of a Post-Tribulation-Rapturist, presenting his reasons for his belief to a company of Pre-Tribulation-Rapturists, being suddenly interrupted by an opponent better versed in "mob psychology" than informed on the pros and cons of the subject being presented, who, by use of certain slogans and familiar phrases, could soon have the audience shouting the speaker down; for I have experienced some things that show this to be not impossible.<sup>3</sup>

3 Long after this was written, two acquaintances of mine, one a Pentecostal minister, the other a Russellite layman, engaged in a discussion in The Dayton Herald on the subject of "Eternal Torment"; the minister taking the affirmative. Finally arrangements were made for them to debate the subject from the platform of Memorial Hall, the largest auditorium in the city. The debate was conducted in the usual unsatisfactory way. As a debater, the minister was outclassed. Quietly his opponent presented his case, and as quietly he propounded questions to and replied to questions by the minister. The minister rose to make his concluding remarks. Instead of making another attempt to reply to his opponent, he gave a brief harangue, then quickly drew from beneath his coat a large American flag, and began to wave it. In an instant the thoughtless mob, for such it was, even if all were church members, was yelling itself hoarse, and the minister and his supporters supposed he had won the debate. But a few thoughtful people doubted that. To them--and they were not all Russellites or anti-Eternal Torment folk--it looked as though the minister, from the first fearing the result of the debate, had arranged as a last resort to make use of "mob psychology". Another acquaintance of mine, a professed Bible teacher, in my young manhood, in England, told me confidentially how he was able always to appear to get the better of an opponent in a discussion. If he found himself in danger of defeat, he said, he would permit his opponent to do the talking until he himself could catch at some word or phrase with which to create a practically new issue, force that new issue, and so win or appear to win the fight. While admitting his shrewdness--the shrewdness of a shyster lawyer--his plan was repugnant to me as an honest seeker after truth; and my respect for him as our leader in those far-away days suffered a serious slump. When, later, I was compelled to contend with him about certain doctrines which he was teaching, and which I knew would inevitably result in serious trouble in our midst, if allowed to continue to be taught, I remembered his plan, refused to let him sidetrack me, forced him to defend himself on the main issue, and then and

That this is not saying too much is evident from the absurd way in which the Rev. I. M. Haldeman deals with the Post-Tribulation-Rapturists in his book, "The Coming of Christ", page 287. Unable to meet their objections to Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism, he attempts to create prejudice against them by saying, "**They are Post-Millennialists in disguise.**" (The emphasis is his.) This ridiculous charge cannot but arouse the contempt of fair-minded people, yet by its means, manifestly false though it is, he no doubt has aroused strong prejudice against Post-Tribulation-Rapturism in the minds of thousands of unthinking Pre-Tribulation-Rapturists. The reverend gentleman adds to his libelous statement this--which explains why he does not get out into the open and face the Post-Tribulation-Rapturists fairly--"**They are more dangerous than Post-Millennialists.**" (In this case the emphasis is mine.) He then proceeds to show how easy it is to rout the Post-Millennialists by means of Scripture simply quoted. But unwittingly he confesses that he cannot do this with the Post-Tribulation-Rapturists for, although he states their position quite clearly, he leaves their questions unanswered.

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there ended his career as our leader. What is the use of holding an error, which can only harm one in this world and shame one in the world to come, when it is possible to get the truth? What folly to contend for a doctrine, when that doctrine cannot be contended for honestly, sanely, Scripturally and logically! If an opponent can present unassailable evidence of the falsity of a theory, the part of wisdom is to make a friend of that opponent, sit at his feet, learn of him, and experience for one's self the truth of the saying: "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Proverbs 3:17. Many times I have done this, so I am merely preaching here what I have often practiced. Such tactics as I have described are a veritable spawn of hell, and should be "taboo" to all Christians; and they are "taboo" to every honest investigator.

## HIRING OTHERS TO DO THEIR THINKING

Again, as illustrative of the way in which otherwise intelligent men leave their thinking to their ministers instead of thinking things through for themselves:

While on one of my visits to Ireland, I was invited to meet a few English businessmen at dinner. At the dinner table our host brought the conversation around to certain Biblical doctrines, as all present were professed Christians. I did not want to take part in the discussion, but was compelled to do so, for certain very direct questions were put to me and answers were insisted upon. My answers brought an attack, which I promptly met and repulsed. Then I took the offensive and soon had the opposition hunting for cover.

Finally one of the foremost of my aggressors, after admitting his inability to continue the discussion which he had helped provoke (because he had never thought these things out for himself but was dependent upon the arguments which he had heard his minister present many times from the pulpit, which arguments I had successfully refuted), asked, "What do we pay our preachers for but to think these things out for us? And when they have done that, why should we not accept what they say?" To which I replied that that was exactly the line of reasoning (?) indulged in by the overwhelming Roman Catholic population of the city in which we then were, that it was unworthy of Protestants; and that so far as I was concerned, I was paying no one to do my thinking for me, for inasmuch as I must give to God an account for myself, I was determined to think for myself before that day of accounting came. Then I changed the subject.

If all preachers really were thinkers instead of being mere theological sponges, as so many of them are, soaking up what they find in the theological seminaries as though it were the very water of life itself, it might be safe to leave one's thinking to them. But here are two homely illustrations which show that real thinking is almost as rare among the clergy as it is among the laity.

### **Are "All the Big Men" Pre-Tribulation-Rapturists?**

A minister in this city had presented from certain popular books the alleged evidence in support of Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism, had mentioned my name as that of the only man of whom he had ever heard who held the Post-Tribulation-Rapture view, and had then remarked that apparently all the big men among the believers in the Second Coming of Christ, several of whom he named, believed in Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism, hence it must be true.

This having been reported to me by members of my Bible Class, at our next meeting I wrote these two columns of names on the blackboard.

#### Pre-Tribulation Rapturists                      Post-Tribulation-Rapturists

F. E. Marsh  
C. I. Scofield  
R. A. Torrey  
A. T. Pierson  
A. B. Simpson  
James M. Gray  
I. M. Haldeman

George Muller  
S. P. Tregelles  
W. J. Erdman  
F. F. Bosworth  
Nathaniel West  
Robert Cameron  
Oswald J. Smith

C. H. Mackintosh  
W. E. Blackstone  
J. Wilbur Chapman  
G. Campbell Morgan

W. E. Biederwolf<sup>4</sup>  
Charles H. Spurgeon  
James H. McConkey  
S. D. ("Quiet Talks") Gordon

Then I asked if the Post-Tribulation-Rapturist list of names was not quite as impressive, from the viewpoint of scholarship, as the Pre-Tribulation-Rapturist list. Also I asked what had the fact that certain men believe in Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism to do with the matter. Was it not a subject that should be settled by the Scriptures, not by the opinions held by men--no matter how estimable, popular, learned, and numerous they might be?

Further, I called attention to the significant fact that at least four of the men whose names appear on the Post-Tribulation-Rapture list--Muller, West, Smith, and Bosworth--reversed themselves after a careful examination of the alleged evidence in support of Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism; and stated that I could add the names of other men who, after teaching Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism for years, had come to the conclusion that the alleged evidence in support of the doctrine is not to be found in the Scriptures, but only in the minds of men. And I emphasized the fact that one man who, after teaching Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism for many years, had come to see that he had no foundation in Scripture for his faith, was a better witness in this matter than ten thousand men who had never carefully examined the evidence for Post-Tribulation-Rapturism, no matter who they were or what their position.

#### **"How Do They Get That Way?"**

Then I asked: Did men like Torrey, Chapman, et al. get the Pre-Tribulation-Rapture doctrine from the Bible after a careful and absolutely independent and unbiased search in that Book, as did these other men and myself our Post-Tribulation-Rapturism? Or did they get it from the books of men who, in turn, had learned it from the books of other men, and so on back to John Darby? I venture to answer that every one of them got it from some previous writer's book. In other words, that when they became interested in the Second Coming of Christ, they read books dealing with that subject and, while imbibing the truth which those books contained about the Second Coming, they also imbibed the errors which they contained about the ridiculous alleged "two stages of His Coming".

At the next meeting of the class, a lady handed me a copy of the latest edition of W. E. Blackstone's "Jesus Is Coming", from one of the front pages of which I read the following letters--proof that my guess was correct that these men had obtained their Pre-Tribulation-Rapture doctrine from man, and then having swallowed the error with the truth and having publicly committed themselves, had

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<sup>4</sup> In reply to a question from me as to his position in this matter, July, 1926, Mr. Biederwolf wrote: "You have 'gotten me' exactly right. I did have a strong leaning toward Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism, but having the purpose only of pure exegesis in mind in the writing of the Millennium Bible, I could not honorably do otherwise than give the interpretations as you have found them on the chapter to which you refer. I have since then gone into the subject, and have done considerable work in the way of resume, and I am leaning strongly to the Post-Tribulation-Rapture theory. I wish it were possible for you and myself, and one or two others whom I could mention, to get together and give some study to this." The "chapter" to which Mr. Biederwolf refers in the foregoing is the second chapter of Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians, and the "interpretations" of that chapter will be found in "What Did Paul Teach the Thessalonians?" (Part Two.) in Volume 2.

never really attempted to separate "the precious from the vile", as had George Muller, Nathaniel West, Oswald Smith, Fred Bosworth and others.

The book, "Jesus Is Coming", by W. E. B., was the first book that made the coming of Jesus Christ a living reality to me. I had already become convinced that our Lord's coming would be before the Millennium, having reached that conclusion in studying the works of the Danish theologian, Martensen, but it was merely a theological conception until I read the book "Jesus Is Coming". It was this that first brought me to definite convictions and made the doctrine not only clear, but very precious. It is one of the books that has had a decidedly formative influence on my life and teaching. I always recommend it to those who are beginning the study of the subject. I hope that it may be as much blessed to others as it has been to me.

R. A. TORREY

A number of years ago I had placed in my hands the little book, "Jesus Is Coming", by W. E. B. Prior to that time I had no defined method of Bible study, and I confess with shame that I had very little passion for Bible reading and for the winning of souls. This book completely revolutionized my thinking, gave me a new conception of Christ and a new understanding of what it meant to work for Him. I most cordially commend it to Christian workers everywhere.

J. WILBUR CHAPMAN

Then from Blackstone's own chapter on "Rapture and Revelation" in "Jesus Is Coming", I refuted the doctrine of Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism, as I shall do in a later volume under the heading, "'Rapture and Revelation': A reply to W. E. Blackstone".

#### **An Average Pre-Tribulation-Rapturist Preacher**

Later, I talked the matter over with this minister, and soon had him even more hopelessly tangled up than certain members of my class (members of his own congregation, by the way) had tangled him up.

The result was that he announced his intention of leaving the subject alone, as he was not sufficiently informed on it to defend his own position. In his previous pastorates, he said, his congregation, like little nestlings, had opened their mouths and taken in anything he offered them; but it was not so with this congregation, for some of them asked awkward questions and demanded answers to these questions which he was not able to give. He admitted that he had been compelled to "dig" into the Scriptures as never before in order to counteract the effects of certain teachings which some of his members had obtained through several years' attendance at my class. But the trouble was that he had not imitated the good example of the Bereans, after whom my class was named, and of whom it is said that they "were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so". Acts 17:11. He had "searched the Scriptures daily" to try to prove that "these things" were not so, and later admitted that he had lamentably failed.

This minister frankly stated that he dared not preach Post-Tribulation-Rapturism even if convinced of its truth, as it would place him in antagonism with his denomination and jeopardize his position. Inasmuch as he held ministerial papers in that denomination, which almost if not quite to a member is Pre-Tribulation-Rapturist, he was, he thought, in duty bound to preach that doctrine.

His honesty and frankness in this matter were refreshing to me, even if I could not approve of his position.

The brother's statement reminded me of an experience I had had several years before. A lady, attending some of my meetings, convinced that what she heard there was true, asked, "Why doesn't our minister teach these things?" I replied that I did not know, and suggested that she ask him. At the next meeting she informed me that she had asked the minister if he thought that what I was teaching was true; when he answered in the affirmative and she asked why, then, did he not teach them? he replied, "Because I have a family to support." I hope such ministers are in the minority, but fear they are not.

Do not think there is any friction between this minister and myself, for there is none. On the contrary, we are very good friends, for his nature is too gentle to permit of his indulging rancor, and I certainly have no desire to display it.

One day I gave him this advice: Until you are prepared to defend Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism, or until you are ready to come over to Post-Tribulation-Rapturism and take the consequences of presenting that doctrine, keep silent as to the time of the Rapture, if you can. If you must mention it, and probably you will be compelled to do so if you continue to preach on the Second Coming, as you should, then, when you present Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism, just remark that while you think this to be true, yet there are others just as honest and capable as yourself who do not agree with it. That will prevent friction and be the truth.

Another Dayton minister with whom, in spite of our differences of opinion on various subjects, I am on very friendly terms, said, when a member of his congregation asked him a question about the time of the Rapture, "I have repeatedly told my people to stay away from John Scruby's Bible Class because he gets them all mixed up." But he could not answer the question. A case of asking for bread and receiving a stone.

## EMOTION, NOT REASON, THE BASIS OF PRE-TRIBULATION-RAPTURISM

Long after the foregoing was written, I came across the following written by S. P. Tregelles in 1864, which shows that in its spirit Pre-Tribulation-Rapture was in his day precisely what it is in our day. So good is his chapter on this subject that I could not forbear quoting him thus extensively.

There is sternness in the truth of God, which might almost seem like harsh severity, when it is regarded by those whose thoughts on subjects of revelation have been formed in a great measure from sentiment and emotion. An imaginative feeling may exist; and this may be so cherished that even the Scripture is only used for sentimental purposes; and thus the force of definite truth is by no means felt, because the mind has sunk into a kind of spiritual reverie: indeed, there is a disposition to avoid definite truth, from a contrast that has been formed between it and that which is supposed to be spiritual....

Emotional religion has always a tendency to make **feeling** the standard of what should be received as truth, and what rejected. A certain kind of high-wrought feeling (approaching to mysticism, or amounting to it) is that which is allowed to rule the judgment as to whatever God has revealed; and sometimes these indefinite claims to spirituality are accepted by others, so that the doctrines of such teachers are supposed to be worthy of all acceptance, not because they are found in Holy Scripture, but because they are said to be true by such holy and devoted men. But if we would judge according to God, we must test all claims to holiness and devotedness by means of truth, and not merely do the reverse. Asceticism is not Christian holiness; the zeal of Francis Xavier is not Christian devotedness.

It is very manifest that the doctrine of a Secret Coming of Christ, and a Secret Removal of the Church to be with Him, is peculiarly suited to those who cherish the religion of sentiment.<sup>5</sup>

What more cheering (they say) than the thought that the Lord may take His people to Himself at any moment? What more animating than the belief that this may take place this very day? And when any one brings them to Scripture, and tries to point out the revealed hope of the Lord's coming, it seems as if there were nothing but coldness in the teaching, and as if the Lord were put far off from them. They ask sometimes if such chilling doctrines can be consistent with love to the Lord, and whether love to His person does not exclude the thought of a revealed interval, and of events that will take place first. It is thus that truth is judged by sentiment and emotion, instead of true emotions, which are according to God, being formed by truth in all its definite severity. Whatever makes the feelings sit in judgment on Scripture, and whatever thus leads to the avoidance of the force of that Scripture teaching which is not in accordance with such feelings, must, however apparently sanctified and spiritual, be of nature, and not of God. Are we to seek to be guided by other hopes than those which animated the Apostolic Church? They knew that days of darkness would set in before Christ's coming; they were instructed respecting the many Antichrists and the final Anti-Christ, but so far from their hope of the coming of the Lord and of resurrection being thus set aside, they were able to look onward through the darkness to the brightness of the morning.

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<sup>5</sup> It is as impossible to discuss a question Scripturally with those who are guided by emotion and sentiment, as it was for Greatheart, in the second part of "Pilgrim's Progress", to arouse Heedless and Too-bold when sleeping on the Enchanted Ground. (This footnote by Dr. Tregelles.)

## Post-Tribulation-Rapturists are Intelligently Watching and Waiting

Dr. Tregelles continues,

It may freely be owned that those who think it right to expect the Lord at any moment, and who sternly condemn others who maintain that His appointed signals shall take place first, have often in their hearts much real love for Him; and love towards His person is never to be regarded lightly. But let such remember the prayer of the Apostle, "That your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment" (Phil. 1:9): it is not only of importance that love should be rightly directed as to its object, but also that there should be in the soul real spiritual intelligence. If a wife has the promise of her husband's return from a distant country, and she has his written directions for the rule of the house during his absence, and part of these directions includes a statement how his return shall be expected, that a letter will first arrive to say by what ship he will come--there would be no want of love (and that, too, intelligent love) on her part, if she sought to be occupied day by day as he directed, and if she showed that she believed his word that the promised letter should come, and that then he would himself arrive by the appointed vessel. She would be waiting according to his word and will; and no one could reproach her for want of love to her lord from not being on the tip-toe of momentary expectation. But if the wife were to say that the part of her husband's directions respecting the promised letter related to the servants of the house, and not to her, and if she were to be constantly on the shore, expecting her husband's landing in a way that he had not promised, and if she refused to be brought to attend simply to what her husband had said--she would, while professing to do this out of love to him, show that she was a visionary, and not one whose love was guided by the simple intelligence of her husband's mind as distinctly expressed: feeling would have led away from true obedience.

There are, indeed, those who say that love can allow of nothing as between their souls and the coming of the Lord; they avoid any real scriptural inquiry on the subject; and when events prophesied by our Lord are pointed out, they say that their views are directed upward, that *there* they find their strength, in contrast to "men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." (Luke 21.26.) And thus they avoid the force of even our Lord's words, through a supposed spirituality. Men's hearts may be dismayed, but this will not apply to believers, who would see in that which caused dismay to others the bright prospect of deliverance to themselves, for the coming of the Lord would be at hand....

Those who make sentimentally the secret rapture the center of all their thoughts, have habitually shown how utterly their love fails towards any Christians who object to this theory. They often speak of them as if such were devoid of love to Christ, and they treat them as if that were the case. It might seem as if they had made that one point (in which they are led by feeling, not by Scripture) the very test of Christian profession. Pages 82-95 "*The Hope of Christ's Second Coming*".