

The Approaching Advent of Christ

by
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CHAPTER XVI

CONCLUSION

In the brilliant debates that took place in England a generation ago on the subject of Tariff Reform, Mr. Asquith related an amusing story from his student days at Balliol, which even the orthodox can enjoy. An Oxford master observed that there were three lessons to be learned from the difference between the two genealogies of our Lord as related by Matthew and Luke. Where they were in agreement, it was meant to be a confirmation of our faith; where they were in open contradiction, it was meant to be a test of our faith; and where they were only seemingly at variance, it was meant to be a test of our ingenuity in reconciling them. And what tests of our faith, what tests of our ingenuity there are in considering the mass of conflicting interpretations among pre-tribs about our Lord's Return!

There is great harmony in proclaiming that the Rapture of the saints must and shall precede the revelation of Antichrist, but there is a perfect medley of voices when one seeks the grounds for this conclusion; for the conclusion is first drawn, and then its advocates cast about for proof-texts and arguments. In days when I was a convinced advocate of the theories examined in this volume, I believed that the leaders differed among themselves on only one or two texts of Scripture. But when I began to investigate, I found that they were all hopelessly at sixes and sevens on scores of texts or points that it was vital for them to be agreed upon. Their conclusion was clear and brave, but it was built on interpretations that half the school repudiated.

Take for example the important point concerning the length of the interval that is to elapse, on pre-trib presuppositions, between the Rapture of the saints and the Day of the Lord. Seiss and one or two others located the Rapture of the saints at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, or about three and a half years from the End of the Age. Newberry, one of Brethren's finest scholars, and a few others, placed the Rapture seven years from the Day of the Lord. But almost all advocates prefer to place it about thirty-five, fifty, or seventy years this side of that Day. Darby had given some encouragement to the view that the Rapture of the Church would take place at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, for in his *Second Coming* (p. 61), he interpreted the translation of the Man-child to heaven (Rev. 12:5) as embracing the Rapture of both Christ and His Church. But nearly all advocates of the new theories refuse to touch it with a barge-pole. Such a rapture is not good enough, for it would still leave the Church in danger of looking the Man of Sin in the face, which is the crowning infamy in the province of prophetic study. But as if to show that all this is the veriest [utmost] guesswork, Sir R. Anderson, in many respects the ablest of their writers, steps in to inform us that "if a thousand years should intervene between" the taking up of the Church in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 "and the Coming to the Mount of Olives, not a single word of Scripture would be broken" (*The Coming Prince*, p. 289).

The sensible conclusion is that the supposed interval is an amiable effort of the imagination. The writers cannot agree on the length of the interval because the Scripture has been so disobliging as to

furnish no hint or suggestion that there is one at all. There was ample opportunity for introducing it. The prophecy of the Seventy Weeks only had to mention that Israel's holy dead were to be raised at the beginning of the apocalyptic Week and the trick was done, for pre-tribs teach that they share in the Rapture. Instead of that, Daniel locates their resurrection and transfiguration at the destruction of Antichrist on the inauguration of the kingly rule of God (12:1-3).

Another point on which the leaders differed was the identity of the Bride of Christ. Who is it? Darby, and nearly all pre-trib advocates, said it was the Church of this dispensation. But Anderson and several others insisted that it referred to Israel. The point had a decisive bearing on the interpretation of the Parable of the Ten Virgins. With extraordinary inconsistency pre-tribs deprived the Remnant of this parable and applied it to the Christian Church, the midnight cry, "Behold the Bridegroom," being Brethren testimony in the nineteenth century to the supposed imminent Second Coming; whereas Anderson and others, seeing its indissoluble connection with the preceding parable of judgment,¹ declared that it is Jewish and refers to Israel, and they referred the midnight cry to the Glorious Appearing of Christ.

Several pre-trib teachers, including Scofield and Newberry, explain Isaiah 26:19 and Daniel 12:1-3 by a literal resurrection of Israel's holy dead. Kelly and Gaebelein, joining hands with the Sadducees, explain them away by referring them to a national resurrection of Israel at the End-time.

Darby, Kelly, Bellett, and all other expositors of the Parable of the Tares, declare emphatically that it sets before us the present Dispensation, the gathering of the wheat signifying the Rapture of the saints at the End of the Age. But Dr. Gaebelein, taking alarm, boldly refers the whole thing to his half-converted and half-Christian Jewish Remnant *after* the Rapture of the Church. Darbyists teach us that the Remnant presupposed in Matthew 24 has the most nebulous spiritual standing and experience, and the haziest knowledge of Christ's person and work. Anderson says openly that they are "Jews, and yet Christians" (*Coming Prince*, p. 170).

Darby, Anderson, Gaebelein, and others refer the Missionary Commission in Matthew 28 to the Jewish Remnant and its preaching tour of the world *after* the Rapture of the Church. Open Brethren to a man repudiate the suggestion as a scandalous vagary [wild idea]. C.H.M. and a host of others dogmatically refer Acts 1:11 to their Secret Rapture *before* the coming of Antichrist; Darby refers it to the Glorious Appearing at the Day of the Lord (*Synopsis*); [and] Anderson [refers it] to a special appearing for the Remnant on Mount Olivet.² Darby and his associates interpret 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 as referring to a coming that our Lord had spoken of in the Gospels, notably in John 14:3 and Matthew 24:45-25:30. But Anderson and others assert that it was a special coming of Christ for the Church, the Body of Christ, specially revealed to the Apostle Paul about A.D. 53. Bullinger, as we saw, excluded from it any reference to Israel's holy. Before his end he assigned 1 Thessalonians 4 to a time after a prior rapture that he invented at Phillippians 3:14. This "sorting" and "dividing" of Scripture was too much for Anderson, and he rejected it in his *Forgotten Truths* (p. 146).

As I write, there comes an amazing suggestion that the Coming of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 actually takes place some years *after* the Rapture!

1 Matt. 25:1; *then, at that time* (*Coming Prince*, p. 188).

2 *Coming Prince*, pp. 186, 288, 20.

Darby and his colleagues all referred the Appearing, the Day, and the Revelation of Christ to the Day of the Lord, succeeding and distinct from the Coming or Rapture, which they taught is the Blessed Hope of the Church. Such distinctions were held to be absolutely vital to a clear comprehension of Scripture, and severe epithets were sometimes hurled at those who questioned them. But they have all been kicked downstairs in the dispensational edifice. Half their successors now refer the Appearing, Revelation, and Day of Christ to the hope of the Church, while others (it seems quite incredible but it is true) are referring "the Blessed Hope" (Tit. 2:13) to the Day of the Lord seven or more years *after* the Rapture of the saints! On Titus 2:13 Anderson says, "Will anyone dare to refer this Appearing to the Day of the Lord?" C. F. Hogg dares anyone to refer it to the Rapture.³

How fleeting is fame in the province of prophetic study and speculation! But yesterday Darby and his associates had earned the gratitude of the whole school for their nice and comforting distinctions in interpreting the terminology of the End; but a strange thing has happened in Israel. Laymen are teaching the Bishops the Paternoster [Lord's Prayer] and describing their distinctive message on the Rapture as "a common confusion."⁴

Pre-tribs generally refer the resurrection of those "that are Christ's" (1 Cor. 15:23) to the Church at the Rapture; Bullinger and Miss Habershon to the resurrection of "Tribulation" saints at the Day of the Lord some years later. Most advocates refer the covering messages to the Seven Angels in Asia (Rev. 2-3) to a subtle and wonderful interpretation of nineteen centuries of Church history. Anderson and Bullinger, entirely unconvinced, refer them to Churches arising *after* the Rapture. F. C. Bland admits frankly that he has no "definite light" that the addresses to the Angels are "subjects for prophetic interpretation" or "come under the head of unfulfilled prophecy" at all.

Some will think that such a variety of interpretations of scores of texts gives greater resourcefulness to the advocates of the new views, since if they are persecuted in one exegetical city they can flee to the next. But most sensible readers will feel that all the ringing of the changes in the premises is necessary because their conclusions are false, and nothing can make them true. As at Babel, the Lord has confounded their speech.

It is a sentimental delusion that a secret Rapture, or a pre-tribulation Rapture, is the hope of the Church. Scripture, on the contrary, asserts in the clearest manner that the Glorious Appearing of Christ is the definite hope of Christians (Tit. 2:13) and, with terrible inconvenience for theorists, locates it at the Day of the Lord. From Matthew to the Book of Revelation the Lord and His Apostles set no other hope before the Church. The Rapture is a mere incident of the Appearing, spoken of in order to show the relation of the sleeping to the living saints at the one Advent in glory, and especially that the saints who survive till the Advent will have no advantage at all over the dead in Christ. It is a stupid obsession to make the Rapture the touchstone of everything. Yet this is what is universally done.⁵ "Think of the beautiful English word 'cellar door' said a foreigner who was struggling with our language. Think of the beautiful word "Rapture"!

3 C. F. Hogg, "The Morning Star," August 1sr, 1912; W. E. Vine, *Rapture and the Great Tribulation*, pp. 33-4.

4 C. F. Hogg, see below.

5 I have not yet had leisure to make a count of the times that the words "Rapture," "raptured," and "rapt" are used in the work of an able and eloquent writer, Mr. D. M. Panton, author of *Rapture*. But it is astonishingly great.

I cited earlier the case of an American Brother who admitted that too much prominence had been given to the Rapture in the thought and writing of pre-tribs. If anyone has any doubt about the necessity of this confession, it will disappear after reading the following astonishing words from a present-day teacher of authority among pre-tribs. They are taken from "The Witness" for June, 1932. Replying to a correspondent who had the wit to see that the theory of an interval of some years between the Rapture and the Judgment furnished a second chance⁶ of repentance for the impenitent at the time of the Rapture, Mr. C. F. Hogg of London gave a reply from which I extract the following;

It is a common confusion to speak of the Rapture of 1 Thess. 4:17 as "the Coming of the Lord." The Rapture ushers the saints into the Parousia or Presence of the Lord, *shortly before His appearing in glory, which is properly His Coming*. The Rapture does not close this age, but is an event in it, the first of the series that bring in the new, or Millennial age . . . *the Second Advent, or Coming of the Lord is His Coming to the earth in power and great glory* for the overthrow of His enemies and the establishment of His Kingdom. As I read, at that time those who have shared in the Rapture, God will bring with Him (Col. 3:3 and 4; 2 Thess. 2:7-10). We rightly reason that the death of the individual believer cannot be His Coming, as that is our going. So neither can the Rapture of the saints be His Coming, for that also is our going to be with Him. The shutting of the door, then, is not the Rapture but the appearing of the glory of our Great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ (Tit. 2:13).

Shades of Darby, Kelly, and C.H.M.!

My experience of the difficulty that many have in grasping the intricacies of pre-trib teaching on prophecy leads me to ask the reader to note the drift of all this. This writer agrees with us in contending that the Coming, the Appearing, the Revelation, and the Day of the Lord *all occur simultaneously* at the close of the Great Tribulation. Each and all constitute "the blessed hope" of Christians today as they did when Paul wrote Titus 2:13.

But the Rapture, according to Mr. Hogg, so far from being a mere incident at the Arrival of our Lord according to 1 Thessalonians 4:16, is now brought forward in front of the Coming of the Lord by a period of time that may be seven years, but may also be a thousand, according to Anderson. The proximate hope of the believer, therefore, is not the Lord's *Coming* at all, but the Church's *going* at the Rapture, which may take place any moment, probably in secret. [And] after some years, at the Day of the Lord, the "Blessed Hope" proper (Tit. 2:13) is fulfilled; it is the Lord's *Coming*.⁷ There is truth here, but not enough. It looks as if the respected author, after retiring from a platform of error, suddenly decides to hang on to it by the eyelids.

I have no fear that the latest adaptation of the new program will gain adherents, even from the simple and careless. Very obviously it parts company from the Scripture. At John 14:3 the Lord said: "I will come again and receive you unto myself." The Rapture follows the Coming. It is the same at Matthew 24:30-31; the Lord comes and the Elect saints are assembled from every land under heaven. So also at

6 Gaebelein is horrified at the very thought of this (*Olivet Discourse*, pp. 125-6). Anderson rather welcomes the prospect (*Unfulfilled Prophecy*, pp. 61-2). Once again we meet it--their agreeing to differ.

7 See chapter 1, where I quote the author's exegesis of Titus 2:13.

Luke 17:24, 34-35. Nor does Paul teach differently. After mentioning those who survive till the *Coming* of the Lord (1 Thess. 4:15), he goes on: "The Lord himself shall *descend from heaven* with a shout . . . *then* we which are alive and remain shall be caught up." Then at 2 Thessalonians 2:1, the Apostle writes: "Touching the *coming* of the Lord Jesus Christ, and our *gathering together unto him*" (R.V.).

In all five passages the Coming and the Rapture are linked indissolubly. Both occur at the Day of the Lord.

One welcomes the admission, however, from an able and devout expositor--and the outstanding teacher among Brethren today--that the true hope of the Church, the glorious Coming of our Lord, will take place (as he says) "At the overthrow of His enemies and the establishment of His Kingdom." Such an admission ought to go far to end the controversy. But the writer, if he wishes to end the "common confusion" that he complains of, must give a wholly good example of coherent thinking and courageous acceptance of the plain meaning of Scripture.

All these advances and changes, with the variations in the interpretation of proof-texts (changes within the school that are enough to make the early leaders turn in their graves), remind one of an acute saying of Provost Salmon's: "Truth is uniform, but it is the very nature of error to be *continually assuming new shapes*" (*Infallibility*, p. 150).

Admitting that on some points of unfulfilled prophecy there is room for differences of opinion, it is yet to be said that theorists, for very appearances' sake, ought to have done something to compose [put in proper form and order] such disarray of interpretation before making high and confident claims to a new understanding. From Lord Melbourne's famous dictum on preserving in public an air of unanimity when there are differences in private, they might have drawn the useful application to generalize more and particularize less on the prophetic future. Speaking of Cabinet government and the revelation of Cabinet secrets, he said: "I don't care what we say, but we had better all say the same thing."

When pre-tribs are expounding doctrines like the deity and the humanity of our Lord, His atoning death on the cross, His bodily resurrection, His session at the right hand of God, His priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, the justification of the sinner by grace, and his complete deliverance through union with the risen Christ, there is gratifying unanimity among them. With one voice they set forth the truth of Scripture magnificently. Kelly's *Notes on Romans* drew praise from the authors of the most notable exegetical work in fifty years.⁸ The explanation of this unanimity is that they were expounding the central truths of the Christian revelation. Then some truths of the Christian faith--the law-free gospel, the believer's union with Christ and his complete deliverance from the old nature (which were sometimes not sufficiently emphasized by systems of theology)--were now expounded by Darby, Kelly, and a thousand laymen with unsurpassed lucidity and fervor.⁹

But when they came to the teaching of prophecy, the unanimity forsook them. Why? Because their

8 Sanday and Headlam in the Introduction to their volume on Romans in *ICC*.

9 One may take at random a plain work by one of the lesser lights--*God's Salvation*, by John Fort. For giving the argument of Romans it loses little by comparison with Gifford, Godet, and the other masters. It is recorded of the author that he was once asked what book had influenced him in wiring it. He replied, "Romans"; and on being asked even more directly, "Romans."

exegesis now, instead of adhering to the main emphasis of Scripture and basing itself on careful and obvious deductions from clear texts, was shot to pieces by idle speculation by the adoption of innovations, like the Secret Rapture and the prodigious missionary tour of the world in 1,260 days by an army of half-converted Jews still in their sins. Preachers without life, without forgiveness, and without the Holy Ghost in the soul will do in 1,260 days what the whole Christian Church has been unable to do in 1,900 years--evangelize the world and convert the "overwhelmingly majority" of the inhabitants of the world to God. This declaration of Scofield works out at about a million converts a day, and this at a time when, *ex hypothesi*, the Holy Spirit is in heaven, Antichrist is raging here below, and the elect evangelists are torn between the Imprecatory Psalms and the Sermon on the Mount!

And this is not an unessential excrescence [ramification] on the system; it is absolutely vital to its existence. The Church, the Body of Christ, is raptured to heaven years and years before the End, so it was given out. Well, somebody had to fulfill those rugged texts in the Gospels and Apocalypse about the Elect's and the Saints' suffering, and about the evangelization of the world right on to the End (Matt. 28:18-20). [But] they must not be full Christians, [or they would have] to claim membership of the Church; nor [must they] be totally unchristian, [or they would have] to leave the world without preachers. Half-christian and half-converted; that filled the bill.

All that can be said now of this piece of prophetic speculation is (to adapt some words of Abraham Lincoln's) that it may fool some students all the time, and all students some of the time; but it is totally impossible that it should fool all student all the time. For it is not expounding Scripture but innovating on it after the very manner of the Rabbis in Israel, with the very same results--God's word made of none effect by the traditions of men.

Again, seizing on the long neglected truth that for Christians it is *the Saviour* who is coming at the Last Day, Darbyists thought that--on the analogy of the forty days after the Resurrection--it would be appropriate if the Coming of the Saviour and Bridegroom of the Church took place secretly and apart from the awe-inspiring phenomena and judgments of the Day of the Lord. Soon they were persuading themselves that Paul really taught this. His outstanding words--Coming, Appearing, Revelation, and Day--were made to agree with a secret Rapture some time *before* the Day. Then from the revival of Julius Africanus' view of the Apocalyptic character of Daniel's Seventieth Week, the further inference was drawn that the Rapture would fittingly take place at its beginning, when Antichrist makes his covenant with the multitude of Jews in Palestine, and before the horrible tribulation under him. But having gone so far, it was natural to go a little farther and make the hope even more "heavenly." How fitting to have the Church right off the scene before ever the Man of Sin should be born! And so the new unwritten tradition settled down at a secret Rapture "about a generation" before the End, with Sir R. Anderson entering a *caveat* [admonition] that the period might be a thousand years! And all was a succession of surmises and inferences, larded with sentiment *ad libitum* [at one's pleasure].

When I think of the extraordinary vogue [popularity] of this Secret Rapture theory, with the comforting invention that the saints will be raptured away before the coming of Antichrist, and of a mere incident having substituted [taken the place of] the Apostolic hope of the triumphant Appearing of our Savior, an illustration will come to mind from Lucian of Samosata's dialogue on "the Rival Philosophies":¹⁰

Hermodimus, I cannot show what truth is, so well as wise people like you and your professor;

10 *Works*, Vol. 2, p. 70; one word altered.

but one thing I do know about it, and that is that it is not pleasant to the ear; fiction is far more esteemed; it is prettier, and therefore pleasanter; while Truth, conscious of its purity, blurts out downright remarks, and offends people. Here is a case of it: even you are offended with me for having discovered (with your assistance) how this matter really stands, and shown that our common object is hard of attainment. Suppose you had been in love with a statue and hoped to win it, under the impression that it was human, and I had realized that it was only bronze or marble, and given you a friendly warning that your passion was hopeless--you might just as well have thought I was your enemy then, because I would not leave you a prey to extravagant and impracticable delusions.

How modern it all seems! If Lucian had not been a Pagan ironist who lived eighteen hundred years ago, we might have supposed that he had in mind the unchristian ostracizing of B. W. Newton, S. P. Tregelles, George Müller, and Frank White in England, and W. G. Moorehead, W. J. Erdman, Nathaniel West, J. M. Stifler, and R. Cameron in America, because they gave "friendly warnings" to the saints against becoming "a prey to extravagant and impracticable delusions," among them the choice theory that in the last great crisis of the world not only shall the Church's feet be like hinds' feet, wending their way among the mountains far above the dust and din of the conflict below, but the Church shall even be raptured clean off the scene before ever the dread Enemy appears. If only it were revealed Truth and not an elegant elaboration of a human theory!

The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians was written in vain for pre-tribs. The view had got about in the Church at Thessalonica that the Day of the Lord,¹¹ which was to be characterized and introduced by two events--the Lord's *Parousia* in triumph (as shown in 1 Thess. 4:16) and the muster of the Elect (verse 17)--had actually arrived. But, says Paul, "Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is worshipped." And then the Apostle refers to Antichrist's own *Parousia*¹² and success, and his complete overthrow by our Lord at His "Appearing and Arrival"--employing the two words that are used again and again for the Church's hope: *Appearing*, which in Titus 2:13 is emphatically said to be "the blessed hope," and *Coming*, which all pre-tribs apply to it.

But note the deciding sense of all this. According to pre-tribs, the Day of the Lord's *Parousia* *precedes* the arrival of Antichrist. *Paul says that men who teach such a thing are deceivers. "Let no man deceive you by any means"--neither by his familiarity with the Bible, his piety, personal prestige, dogmatism, nor even by his having been used of God to teach much truth--be not deceived; the Apostasy and the Antichrist must come first.* This is Paul's doctrine, yet today it is abominated and cast off as "Jewish" or utter confusion.

11 At this time in our inquiry it is assumed as proved that the Coming (*parousia*) of the Son of Man (Matt. 24:39) and the Day of the Son of Man (Luke 17:30) coincide; that the Coming (*parousia*) of Christ (Messiah) according to 1 Cor. 15:23 coincides with the Day of Christ (Phil. 1:10, etc.); and the Coming (*parousia*) of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 2:1) [coincides] with the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:8). Most emphatically, therefore, the Coming (*parousia*) of *the Lord* (1 Thess. 4:15; James 5:7-8) coincides with the Day of the Lord (1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Thess. 2:2, R.V.).

12 It is well pointed out by Zahn and others that Antichrist, in Paul's view, will have a dazzling *Parousia* when he comes on the scene.

This will be painful and shocking to those who in their heart of hearts think that their leaders of last century could not, or would not, go wrong. But as Jerome said long ago about objectors who squirmed under his application of Divine truth, "Let them not lay it to our account; it is the apostle who says this."¹³ But there is even worse, and though it will be hailed with an indignant and passionate outcry, the time has now come to say that our Lord Himself taught the founders of His Church--in a private discourse¹⁴ *after* He had said good-bye to the City, the Nation, and the Remnant (Matt. 23:37-39)--to beware of men who taught: **First**, that His Coming would be *secret* (Matt. 24:26-27); **Second**, that His Coming was *imminent*, or unrelated to prophetic events (Matt. 24:6, 8, 14); **Third**, that it would *precede* the coming of Antichrist (Matt. 24:15; cf. 2 Thess. 2:3); [and] **Fourth**, that it would *precede* the Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:21, 23-25); Mark 13:23-24).

Yet today the bold denial of all four warnings has been exalted by spiritual men into a new tradition and a new orthodoxy. "Extravagant and impracticable delusions" are given out as truths from heaven, and a man who solemnly heeds what the Lord said is looked upon as cracked or past praying for. In the interest of fantastic innovations on the faith, large portions of our Lord's teaching are pushed aside as inapplicable to, and even unsuitable for, Christians.

I will quote some words by the editor of an influential American prophetic magazine called "Our Hope."¹⁵ This magazine is of outstanding merit for some beautiful meditations, month-by-month, on the person and work of our Lord, and for some admirable instruction on the prophetic future. [Nevertheless] it is also outstanding for its complete identification of the opinions of its editor, Dr. Gaebelein, and his principal teacher, William Kelly, with Truth itself, and for the unending slaughter of the Philistines who teach differently from them on the events preceding and accompanying the Day of the Lord. There is coldness, with aloofness, even for those of the Pure school who say "tweedledum" on some detail of the prophetic future, when it was only permitted to them to say "tweedledee."

When writing on Christian truth, Dr. Gaebelein, in several works, exercises great gifts of exposition. When he is advocating error or elucidating novel prophetic theories, reasoned proof gives place to extraordinary dogmatism, sweeping and unchristian condemnation¹⁶ of Churches and Church usages, and of writers whose chief sin consists in seeing through the grotesque fable of the Remnant that he espouses, and in accepting the guidance of our Lord on the End of the Age. Dr. Gaebelein could write some magnificent books; but in the opinion of the present writer, his *Gospel of Matthew* is a disaster for the truth.

I spoke just now of the sweeping condemnation of Church customs. Even when they are based upon the command of our Saviour and have been observed always and everywhere since the very time of the Apostles, they were not spared. In condemning the excessive and wrong use of The Lord's Prayer by Christians in times of sickness and danger, Dr. Gaebelein goes on to condemn its use at all by Christians:

13 Quoted by C. D. Maitland.

14 Mark 13:3; Matt. 24:3.

15 I am referring to the magazine as I knew it up to the outbreak of war, when the present MS. was first prepared for the press (1914).

16 I am referring particularly to his exposition of the Sermon on the Mount, in his *Matthew*, and to his *Olivet Discourse*, where he accommodates the teaching of the Son of God to the requirements of his and Kelly's dispensational system.

*It is one of the rags which Luther brought away from the old Roman sepulchre. Yet it is not much better in other denominations. . . . All this practice, the use of this model for prayer, as the Lord's prayer given to the Church, to be used by the Church, is wrong, decidedly unchristian, nor can it be proven from the New Testament that it is intended for Christians. . . . Centuries passed before it became a settled custom to make the prayer the King gave to His Jewish disciples the prayer for Christians and to use it in the form and in the way it is used now.*¹⁷

He then goes on to quote approvingly some words of Kelly's, where he performs the congenial task of sitting in judgment on the whole of Christendom--except Brethren, since they do not use the Prayer.¹⁸ "Is there a soul using the Lord's prayer as a form that has a real understanding of what it is to ask the Father in the name of Christ. I believe they have never entered into that great truth."

The above extracts illustrate the kind of browbeating and judaizing exegesis that is used to impose freak theories on the faithful. Admitting a later date for the doxology of the prayer, we yet affirm that the rest is a tissue of mis-statements from beginning to end.

Take the slur on Dr. Gaebelein's own heroic countryman, Martin Luther, whom Adolph Saphir, of blessed memory, declared to be God's greatest gift to the Church since Paul. Saphir, a Calvinist who knew the writings of the Reformers thoroughly, says in his own magnificent *Lectures on the Lord's Prayer*,¹⁹ that Luther gave rich and spiritual expositions of the Prayer, and he then continues: "Martin Luther said once of the Lord's Prayer that it was *the greatest martyr on earth*, because it was used so frequently without thought and feeling, without reverence and faith. This quaint remark, as true as it is sad, applies with still greater force to the word 'Amen.'"

And the unkindest martyrdom of all for the Lord's Prayer has been at the hands of ultra-evangelicals in the past hundred years. Having a system of prophetic interpretation and a heavenly secret Rapture to commend, they found the Prayer too earthly, too Jewish, and linked to a rugged view of the End; hence, unsuitable for saints of the blessed heavenly calling. It must be set aside.

17 *Gospel of Matthew*, pp. 139-40. On p. 143 Dr. Gaebelein says: "We wish only to say that this prayer will be heard once more in the earth and will then be used as it once was used by the Jewish disciples when they were sent forth by our Lord. When the Church is taken from the earth a believing Jewish Remnant will give the witness and preach the Gospel of the Kingdom once more. They will undoubtedly use this prayer *during the great tribulation*." This explains much! It is easy to criticize Luther. But despite his faults, he was a wise master-builder; and nowhere did he show it so clearly as in refusing to scrap *all* that he found in Rome, particularly some helpful usages and practices that go back nearly to the Apostolic Age, or well within it; in refusing to treat the Church as having been forsaken when the last of the Apostles died.

18 In the course of thirty odd years I have met only one of the Brethren Community who felt he could conscientiously use the Lord's Prayer.

19 P. 404. Concerning the little word "as" in the petition, "Forgive us our debts *as* we forgive our debtors," Saphir says that it is not a measure of the Divine forgiveness; it means "since," and simply signifies that we are not coming to prayer in an unforgiving spirit. This disposes of Dr. Gaebelein's captious reasoning on the point. See his *Matthew*, i., p. 143. And one should by all means see the whole rich exposition by Saphir.

Let not the reader think that the reference to the Lord's Prayer is a deviation. On the contrary, it is a *watershed* in the controversy. Dr. James Moffatt, in his *INT*, made use of a striking illustration from Sir Walter Scott's *Fair Maid of Perth*. "Discussing the magnificent view of the Tay valley which may be gained from the Wicks of Baigle, Scott quotes what a local guide said, on reaching a bold projecting rock on Craig Vinean, 'Ah, sirs, this is the decisive point.'"²⁰

So here at Matthew 6:9. As we survey the landscape of pre-trib interpretation, and especially of the judaizing of much of our Lord's teaching in the interests of a theory, we say confidently to our readers, "this is the decisive point!"

In boldly, energetically, and resolutely attacking the use of the Lord's Prayer by Christians, Dr. Gaebelein and Mr. Kelly know what they are about. Their aggressive sophistry must win here or their whole system is lost. So long as Christians in childlike simplicity use the Lord's Prayer, they will hold on to the Four Gospels, including the great *Parousia* Discourse in Matthew 24-25 and the other in Luke 17, as containing teaching that is eminently suitable for those who love the Saviour: suitable now for Jewish Christians in the land of Israel, [and] now for the Elect scattered over the earth from one horizon to the other. And that being so, Gentile conceits of the nineteenth century will wither before the flood of light emanating from Matthew 24-25. But let the unwary Christian be once persuaded that the Lord's Prayer is merely "Jewish" and for Jews, let him be off his guard here, and let him only dally here with the "dispensational,"²¹ then the Four Gospels will go the same way as the Lord's Prayer. And he will descend a slippery slope with no stop till he reaches an edifice called "Dispensational House," pleasant to look upon but inside a house of bondage.

Hence the energy and persistence of Kelly and his disciple in America to keep Christians from using the Lord's Prayer. They can make no progress in commending their wild notion that the Lord frequently addressed the Apostles as the representatives of a half-converted, half-Christian company of Jews in the End-time (who are going to do unparalleled miracles in the very times of Antichrist), no progress in commending the Remnant fable and the Secret Rapture fable, until they have seduced Christians from a loyal acceptance of the Lord's teaching in Matthew 5-7, 24-25, and other parts of the Four Gospels. It must all be proved "Jewish." Hence the slur on Luther, the distortion of history to make the use of the Lord's Prayer by Christians an invention of ecclesiastics,²² and the totally

20 Cited by Sir William Ramsay in *The First Christian Century*, p. 16, where he reviewed Dr. Moffatt's work, and criticized his use of the illustration in regard to the origin of the N.T. writings.

21 I have no quarrel with sane "dispensational truth." Properly understood, it helps to explain much in Scripture. But one must resolutely resist any system that conflicts with the decisive example of our Lord in Luke 4:18-19. He inaugurates "the acceptable year of the Lord," which will end with "the Day of Vengeance of our God" (Isaiah 61:2). Matthew 22:11-14, the conclusion to the most "dispensational" of all parables, shows the testing of hypocrites and the Elect *at the same crisis*, exactly as in the Parable of the Tares (Matt. 13:40-43).

22 In his *Apostles Creed* (E.T., p. 145) Zahn, referring to N.T. critics who claim that Christianity first circulated without a belief in the Virgin Birth of our Lord, says it "is a fiction of which surely no one need be proud." And when Dr. Gaebelein dogmatically tells us that the early Church did not use the Lord's Prayer, we will tell him the same thing. We know that at the Last Supper the Lord and His Apostles used the ordinary Jewish Psalm for such an occasion (see Edersheim). We know also that the Apostolic Church frequented the Temple and used the "prayers" in use there (Acts

unchristian sitting-in-judgment on the whole of Christendom, which to its credit observes the *command* of its Lord and Saviour, "*After this manner pray ye.*"²³ The Lord's Prayer, I repeat, is a watershed. Here it is decided whether one is a plain, ingenuous [sincere] Christian subject to the teaching of one's Lord and amenable to His solemn commands, or whether one is a Christian who plays fast and loose with the Lord's teaching, accepting it for himself in homeopathic doses and calling the rest "Jewish" in order to bolster up a set of Remnant theories that are a travesty of Scripture teaching.

What kind of Christians were the Apostolic disciples? Had they learned this recent shift of setting Paul's Epistles above the Lord's oral teaching, of making Christ's teaching of none effect by dispensational traditions?

Let us listen to Paul, and to Paul in the very act of claiming that special revelations came through him to the saints:

Now to him that is able to stablish you according to *my* gospel and *the preaching (kerugma) of Jesus Christ*, according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested (Rom. 16:25-6, R.V.).

Zahn proves conclusively that in both cases it is the subjective genitive that is used.²⁴ The gospel of *me, my* gospel--that is, not the gospel about me, but the gospel that I preach; and *Jesus Christ's preaching*--the proclamation that He made when on earth, not the proclamation made about Him by the Apostle. Decisive, as Zahn shows, is the exactly parallel expression, "They repented at *the preaching (kerugma) of Jonah* (Matt. 12:41)--not the preaching about Jonah, but "Jonah's preaching."

2:42-47). It is totally unlikely that they omitted the Lord's Prayer, which was Jewish in a good sense, and had been given to the Apostles by the Lord. The use of the Lord's Prayer in the Apostolic Age is clearly certified by the *Didache*, a Church Manual almost certainly composed well within the Apostolic Age. The article on the *Didache* in Hasting's *Dictionary of The Apostolic Church* says that "the larger number of scholars favor a date between 80 and 100." And Dr. Vernon Bartlet in Hasting's D.B. (extra volume) says we may "with confidence" date it before 100, rather than after; and "with diffidence" A.D. 8-100 "is the most likely decade known to us" (p. 449). Well, we learn from the *Didache* that Christians used the Lord's Prayer three times a day, substantially as we have it in the R.V. Unhappily, as Dr. Nestle points out in Hasting's DCG, the mechanical use of the prayer entered early. See his article, also Dr. Plummer's, in Hasting's DB (vol. 3), and for a defence of its use as a form, the article in *The Protestant Dictionary*. I am happy to draw attention to some excellent remarks by Messrs. Hogg and Vine in their *Touching the Coming* (p. 150), where its use is recommended.

23 Matt. 6:9. Obviously, as Zahn points out in his commentary on Matthew, the Lord sometimes in the Sermon on the Mount presupposed that his disciples were under the Law; they could not be otherwise in Palestine. He spoke to them as an Israelite to Israelites. But with this qualification the whole of the Lord's teaching is for *Christians; all of it.*

24 *INT*, ii., pp. 278-9. In a long study of "Gospel" in his *Constitution and Law of the Church*, Harnack takes the same view. He gives five reasons why it is "almost certain" that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Gospel He preached, and not the Gospel concerning Him. He then refutes five arguments used by Dobschütz to prove the contrary (pp. 298-300). Harnack takes the same view of Heb. 2:3 as Zahn, whom he quotes on the section.

The Gospel of Christ that Paul glories in is the Gospel of Christ "as its author and its first herald" (Zahn). Absolutely decisive is Hebrews 2:3, where our Lord is shown to be *the pioneer preacher of the gospel*:

In the same way, too, are we to understand "the word of Christ," Col. 3:16, and the similar plural terms, 1 Tim. 6:3. It is evident that this can as little signify "the word about Christ" as can "the word of the Lord," where it denotes the gospel, or a single word of Jesus (Acts 20:35; 1 Thess. 4:15). It is rather the content of that which Jesus first proclaimed, and which has since lived on in the Christian community--gospel and commandment, promise and teaching.²⁵

It will do us good to hear those two texts of the apostle's in the new light. Colossians 3:16--"Let *Christ's word* dwell in you richly in all wisdom." 1 Timothy 6:3--"If any man teacheth a different doctrine, and consenteth not to sound words, *even our Lord Jesus Christ's words*, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is puffed up, knowing nothing, but doting about questionings and disputes of words."

Zahn concludes a powerful study as follows:

In view of all this, it should be self-evident--and may be mentioned here--that "the testimony of Jesus" in Revelation is primarily the testimony that Jesus Himself, the true Witness (Rev. 1:5, 3:14), gave during His life on earth (cf. John 3:11, 5:31, 7:7, 18:37; 1 Tim. 6:13). This fundamental meaning occurs in Rev. 19:10; in 1:2 it is transferred to that which the exalted Jesus testifies to the Churches through John. . . . Just as one may not translate *ho logos tou theou* (Rev. 1:9, 20:4; cf. 1:2), "the word or doctrine concerning God," so *marturia tou Jesou* may not be rendered "the testimony concerning Jesus."²⁶ The derivation of all Christian preaching from the lips of Jesus Himself is very clearly affirmed in the Johannine Epistles (1 John 1:5; cf. 1:1,3). The Christian teaching is the teaching of Christ Himself (2 John 9). The one all-inclusive command of God (1 John 3:22-3, 5:2 ff) is the command and word of Christ (2:3-8) (pp. 378-9).

With this new light let us hear the sentence on those who disparage putting Christians under the Lord's oral teaching:

Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not *in Christ's teaching*, hath not God: he that *abideth in the teaching*, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and *bringeth not this teaching*, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting (2 John 9).

Clearly in the Apostolic Church it was a vital question, as it is today with us, whether Christ's teaching is absolutely binding on Christians. Paul and John decided that it is. "To keep God's word and have Jesus Christ's testimony," this described Christians in the Apostolic Age.

Important is another text from John: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and

25 Zahn: *op. cit.*, ii., p. 378; the Greek replaced by English.

26 On Rev. 12:17, Darby writes in his *Apocalypse*: "It appears to me certain, that the testimony of Jesus Christ is the testimony that He has rendered Himself, not the testimony that is rendered unto Him" (p. 61).

his commandments *are not grievous*" (1 John 5:3). It links up with the beautiful saying in Matthew 11:28-29: "come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

And the yoke of Christ is simply the yoke of our gracious *Teacher*; Jesus Christ, who gives commandments and the inward power to observe them:

The saying forms a fine contrast with what precedes.

The "babes" receive the revelation--a real revelation of the relation that subsists between the Father and the Son; here the toilers and "heavy laden" are invited to accept Christ's easy yoke. . . . Those who are burdened by the Pharisaic yoke of the Law are addressed--those upon whom their religious leaders "bind heavy burdens" (23:4).

"The Yoke" (of the Law, commandments, etc.) is a common expression in Rabbinic; cf. *ex. gr.*, *Pirke Aboth* iii. 6): "Whoso receives upon him the yoke of the Law." Here a deliberate contrast with the yoke of the Law is suggested. *And learn of me*: cf. Ecclus. 51:26 ("Put your neck under the yoke, and let your soul receive instruction").

The "gentleness" of Christ determines the character of his yoke. The Burden of the Jewish Law was due to its external character as something imposed from without; the yoke of Christ is "gentle" because it ceases to be something external and becomes an inward experience.²⁷

Dr. A. H. McNeile in his commentary says that the words "of Mt. 11:28 ff. form a beautiful introduction to 12:1-13, where two typical instances are given of the 'kindliness'²⁸ of Christ's yoke as compared with the law of the Sabbath." And Plummer says: "The Pharisees had made the sabbath an institution so burdensome that its Divine character was lost sight of: this could best be restored by showing that it was a blessing and not a burden. The Son of Man vindicates man's freedom." He connected it with benevolence and so fulfilled its fundamental purpose (Plummer).

All this proves that the oral teaching of our Lord during "the days of His Flesh" was of supreme and decisive importance in fixing the beliefs and customs of the Apostolic Church in all lands, whether about righteousness, repentance, love, divorce, riches, or His Second Coming. One word of His was decisive.

And on His *Parousia* our Lord taught us not by sentences but by whole chapters.²⁹ He described the signs both remote and near; gave with some detail the situation in Judæa in the End-time with instructions to the Israelitish Church how to act (Matt. 24:15-27); set forth the events preceding and accompanying His Return and the triumphant establishment of God's kingly rule. He remembered also

27 Canon Box, *Century Bible, in loco* (abridged). There is an ample note on the "yoke" in the comments of K. Lake and H. J. Cadbury in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. 4 (pp. 173-4), on Acts 15:10, where the same view is taken.

28 McNeile gives the Greek word here (*chrēstotēs*); I have supplied the translation of Moffatt, which is emphatically endorsed by A. T. Robertson, *in loco*.

29 Matt. 24-5; Mark 13; Luke 17:20-37; 21:5-38.

in a series of solemn parables the community of believers that would be won for Him from all Nations, through the preaching of the gospel (Matt. 24:32-25:30). There is here no reference to the local conditions in Judæa, because He needed to teach truth applicable to every land under heaven.

Shall we thankfully receive His teaching or shall we allow judaizing Gentiles, under a specious plea of esoteric understanding, to set His teaching aside--prating of "harmonizing" Paul and the Lord when they never differed, and in reality setting them at variance?

Canon Liddon³⁰ remarked once on the finality that our Lord presupposed for His teaching, when commissioning the Apostles to evangelize the Nations (Matt. 28:18-20): "This is not the least noteworthy feature of our Lord's words, that he does not foresee a time or circumstance when any part of his teaching will become antiquated or untrue, inappropriate or needless."

But if the great preacher had had occasion to study the works of Gentile writers who accommodate our Lord's teaching to their theories of the End (calling this parable, this precept, this sermon "Jewish" and therefore not suitable for Christians, and this promise to those who pray in faith and this very Missionary Commission to preachers "dispensational") he would have found that even Fundamentalists have a way of making the Lord's teaching of none effect when seeming to respect it.

A German Prince was once visiting a certain City. When waited upon by a deputation from the Town Council, he expressed great surprise that his arrival had not been heralded by salvos of cannon. The Burgomaster, who had a sense of humor, replied that there were a hundred reasons for the omission. Asked by the Prince what they were, he began: "In the first place we have no cannon; in the second we---" "Now," broke in the Prince, "your first reason is so good that I don't want to hear the other ninety-nine."

That apposite [pertinent] answer comes to mind as one reflects on the pre-trib advocacy of a secret *Parousia* of our Lord *before* the times of Antichrist. We wait in vain for one strong argument that simply compels us to adopt their view of the End. Instead, we get the distortion of scores of texts whose obvious and frank interpretation is ruinous to their system. Dozens more are given far-fetched meanings that would have staggered the Apostolic writers. And then we get a theory of the Jewish Remnant *pour faire rire*, for no other purpose than to keep Christians from applying the teaching of our Lord on His Advent to Jewish Christians in the land of Israel, or to the Elect won by the missionary crusade presupposed in Matthew 24:14, 22:1-14, and 38:18-20.

They have not a single text of Scripture that is even remotely conclusive.

Sir R. Anderson, when once challenged by an American writer³¹ to name a single text that taught the Rapture of the Church out of the world before the times of Antichrist, replied: "There it is; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17". But his American interlocutor had no difficulty in showing that the text could not be made to teach any such thing, because neither Antichrist, nor Seventieth Week, nor tribulation, nor "seal" is mentioned. The question at issue for Paul was simply, are the holy dead at a disadvantage when the Lord comes. All else he left in abeyance as not affected by the Thessalonians' request for light. The American writer might have answered even more devastatingly that 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17

30 Cited by J. A. Broadus.

31 Dr. Robert Cameron: *Scriptural Truth about the Lord's Return*, p. 140.

could not be made to teach a pre-Antichrist Rapture because it associates the Coming of the Lord with the First Resurrection, and *everywhere* in Scripture that resurrection is indissolubly linked with the inauguration of God's Kingdom and the conversion and renewal of Israel at the very End of the Age. Sir R. Anderson's dogmatic assertion in his writings that 1 Thessalonians 4 gives a "mystery" coming--one now revealed for the first time--is sheer imagination. It refers back to the Lord's Coming in Matthew 25:1-13 (and 24:30-31), which he rightly located at the Day of the Lord, as verse 1 demands.

On any plain doctrine of Scripture the least taught pre-trib will find a dozen unequivocal proof-texts. On the Secret, pre-Antichrist Rapture the most learned cannot find even one.

As direct texts fail them, most theorists, challenged for a conclusive argument for the Rapture of the Church before the times of Antichrist, reply: "The Church must be raptured first, otherwise she will undergo the wrath of God in the Great Tribulation; and the Scripture asserts positively that she is delivered from the wrath to come." Here at last we have an argument that enjoys the unique distinction of being pressed unanimously by every man in the school. It is their trump card; and we on our part know perfectly that it does its work for the new theories more effectively than all others combined. It is employed with an wearying zeal by Darbyists who, in presenting it, dwell on the perfectness of the Church's redemption. Christ shed His blood to deliver His heavenly people from the wrath to come. How, therefore, can the Church go through the wrath of God in the Great Tribulation?

Sentiment on this point is amazingly strong. It is not a question of courage or the like, but simply again (as on the "heavenly" Rapture) [of] their sense of the fitness of things. In spite of our Lord's leaving the Elect on earth till the Glorious Appearing in Matthew 24:31, [of] Paul's leaving them in tribulation till the same event in 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10, and [of] John's leaving them either to fall in the Great Tribulation or survive till the Coming and Resurrection in Revelation 11:18 and 19:6-20:6, pre-tribs think that the general consideration just stated overrides all else. The character of God and the work of Christ are at stake. Hence the deeply-rooted aversion to the old view. Preachers would be removed from the preaching plan and evangelists would be left in a precarious position if they taught openly and fearlessly Christ's doctrine on this subject as applicable to Christians--[because] for better or for worse, ordinary pre-tribs have a horror of the view. It is a doctrinal leprosy that must be avoided. It goes back to the finished work of Christ and the origin of the Tribulation in the Last Days. Careless readers and others who believe what pleases their fancy are misled by specious reasoning, since they do not stop to examine it and test its validity.

In one of the greatest controversial masterpieces of our language, a work that every student who cares for the intellectual position of Protestantism will endeavor to keep in print, a great theologian and mathematician expressed himself thus on the art of presenting a bad case:

It is a common rhetorical artifice with a man who has to **commend** a false conclusion deduced from a syllogism of which one **premise** is true, and the other false, to spend an immensity of time in proving the premise which nobody denies. If he devotes a sufficient amount of argument and declamation to this topic, the chances are that his hearers will never ask for proof of the other premise (p. 63).³²

32 *Infallibility of the Church*, by Provost Salmon of Dublin (London, John Murray). A half century ago law students were recommended in "Blackwood's Magazine" to go over Chillingworth's *Religion of Protestants* for drilling in its logical processes. Aslmon's work loses nothing by

Any general election furnishes many examples of the truth of this. Here is one taken at random:

All arrangements that make for Imperial unity are worthy of acceptance. Empire Free Trade makes for Imperial unity. Therefore Empire Free Trade is worthy of acceptance.

By brilliant argument and declamation the major premise, which no one disputed, was easily demonstrated; the minor premise was dismissed with a wave of the hand and a casual remark that its truth was "self-evident." The conclusion was then pressed home with easy success, for most people are easily persuaded into believing what they want to believe. But orthodox Free Traders, and many Tariff Reformers, had no difficulty in showing that Empire Free Trade's conduciveness to Imperial unity, far from being self-evidently true, was utterly false, since it would rend the Empire from top to bottom--not a single Dominion would stand for it. The syllogism, therefore, was false, since "if doubt attaches to any one step in the argument, that doubt will attach to the conclusion. If doubt attaches to more steps than one, the conclusion is affected by multiplied doubt."³³

How does the case stand with pre-tribs' reasoning on the Church and the Great Tribulation? They do just as the Empire Free Traders did. Here is their syllogism: The Church of God is saved from the wrath to come. The Great Tribulation consists in God's wrath. Therefore the Church of God will be saved from the Great Tribulation.

They spend an immensity of time in proving that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, in pointing out that the Church by the blood of Jesus is delivered from the wrath to come. And from this premise--the truth of which no one disputes--they proceed to commend to their readers the conclusion that the Church must escape the Great Tribulation. But, even at the risk of seeming irksome or slow-witted, we wish to remind them of something that has escaped their notice. Why not give some attention to the minor premise and prove to us that the Great Tribulation is the wrath of God? This, however, is the last thing that pre-tribs can be brought to do. Scores of tracts pass it by. And naturally, because that part of their syllogism, which they adroitly hurry over, is completely false. It is a blunder that the Great Tribulation consists in God's wrath. Their conclusion, therefore, that the Church will escape the Great Tribulation is false, since if falsity attaches to one of the premises it attaches to the conclusion.

An amusing illustration of this logical fallacy is given by Dr. H. L. Goudge of Oxford in his refutation of the legend of the *Lost Ten Tribes*. He begins his *British Israel Theory* thus:

There is a story of King Charles II, that he once puzzled the Royal Society by propounding the question, Why is a dead fish heavier than a live one? The men of science debated this question with much acumen, and offered various solutions of it. It however occurred to one of them to make sure by experiment that the dead fish was in fact the heavier; and it was found that it was not. Now this trick of the Merry Monarch is often played upon us by our own minds. We assume for one reason or another the reality of some alleged fact, and then embark upon inquiries based upon it.

comparison. Another masterpiece that Protestants should keep in print is Karl V. Hase's *Handbook to the Controversy with Rome*. *Both works are unrefuted and irrefutable.*

33 Salmon, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

I propose to examine "the alleged fact" that the Great Tribulation of the End-time is God's wrath against those who go through it.

In some remarks on that Tribulation, Darby stated that he knew of only six texts dealing with the matter--Jeremiah 30:7, Daniel 12:1, Matthew 24:21; Mark 13:19; Revelation 3:10 and 7:14.³⁴ Similarly Kelly in his *Second Coming* (p. 235).

But I can suggest two others that they leave alone; and I do not wonder that Darby and Kelly should have omitted them, for they smash their whole case on the Great Tribulation. I refer to Revelation 13:7: "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and authority was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations." And Revelation 13:12-17, of which I quote the twelfth verse: "*The devil* is come down unto you, having great wrath."³⁵

According to Darby and his followers, the Great Tribulation is the wrath of *God* against the Jewish people for their rejection of *Christ*. According to Scripture, it is the *Devil's* wrath against the saints for their rejection of *Antichrist* and adherence to Christ.

Let the reader once see the Scripture truth on this point and the whole pre-trib case will be exposed as a campaign of assumptions, mis-statements, and sentiment.

Take the second Scripture that I have quoted, Revelation 12:12-17. Undoubtedly we are transported to the Last Days. Satan, cast down from the heavenly sphere, rushes in his fury on the Israelitish Church of the End-time. She is marvelously spared, escaping to the wilderness (cf. Matt. 24:15-16, which gives the same event) where she is protected during the three and a half years of the Great Tribulation. Foiled in his purpose to destroy Christianity in its original home, Satan turns to the Woman's remaining seed (ver. 17), those which "keep God's commandments and hold the testimony of Jesus"--that is (as this book of Revelation and John's other Epistles show), to Christians who give consent to the Divine commands, who fulfill all righteousness (Rom. 8:4³⁶ and 1 Cor. 7:19³⁷) and [who] adhere unswervingly to Jesus Christ's oral testimony. Foiled twice in Judæa, Satan turns to persecute Christians all over the world. Chapter 13 gives the instruments for this purpose.

Out of the restless sea of nations, Antichrist, at the head of an ancient kingdom, is called up from the Abyss to fulfill his course (cf. 11:7). Wounded apparently unto death in a campaign against the saints, his miraculous and satanic healing evokes the wonder of the world (13:3, 12, 14). With this recovery he develops an astonishing activity, assuming openly the direction of operations where hitherto Satan,

34 *Collected Writings*, vol. 11 (Prophetic), p. 251.

35 In striking confirmation is Revelation 2:10, which reads: "Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold, *the devil* is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life" (R.V.). How similar to Revelation 3:10, 12:12, and 13:7. Past, present, and future tribulation comes from the Devil.

36 "That the righteous requirement of the law should be fulfilled in us" (Darby's translation). "To secure the fulfillment of the Law's requirements in our lives" (Moffatt).

37 "The keeping of God's commands was the whole matter" (F. S. Grant, *in loco*). "Obedience to God's commands is everything" (Moffatt).

always invisible, had been the inspiring mind. Out of the land (ver. 11, figure of the ordered society of the world) "a fresh and undefeated" helper comes to his aid. It is the False Prophet. At first sight he seems not to have the ferocious characteristics of the Antichrist (ver. 2). His only weapons are the two horns of a lamb. For like our Saviour (the true Lamb of God), who won his Community on earth by word and deed, this prophet gains adherents and worshippers for the World-ruler by preaching and by miracles.

His ministry is also a caricature of that of Elijah and the two Prophets of the End-time (Rev. 11:1), all of whom called, or will call, down fire from heaven to the glory of God and the discomfiture [rout] of His enemies. This wonder-working Prophet, who comes with the meekness and harmlessness of a lamb, is really "a wild beast prepared for offence and defence" in the campaign against the saints. His success in the service of the Antichrist is as dazzling as that of the Antichrist in the service of Satan (vv. 1-8). The world's traffic and the world's commerce contribute to the spread of this short-lived triumph of the powers of darkness; a mark of distinction is given to all their adherents, on their right hand or their forehead.³⁸

Christendom is at their mercy--all except the saints in Christ Jesus, the Elect of the Christian confession (Matt. 24:11, 21-24; 2 Thess. 2:9-13; Rev. 14:12). Such shall be the signs and wonders and dangers that, "if possible," says the Lord, the Elect would yield. "And what does that mean," said Adolph Saphir, "except that it is *not possible*. The saints have patience, have wisdom, have faith (13:10, 18; 14:12). Neither menace nor delusion can seduce them from their loyalty to Christ. By God's grace they see through the whole conspiracy of those dazzling thousand days, and resist till the End, or dying, pass into the presence of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:9-17).

Here then we have two chapters, Revelation 12-13, that were actually written to describe the origin, nature, and course of the Great Tribulation; 14:1 to 15:4 gives the issue. It is Satan, through the Antichrist and the False Prophet, falling on the saints of the Last Days, who *will* follow the Lamb at all costs and will not do homage to the powers of darkness. Those two chapters, however, were written in vain for William Kelly. In his *Second Coming* he has a very long chapter of fifty-two pages devoted to this subject, "The Great Tribulation and Those Who Will Pass Through It."³⁹ In another work, *Christ's*

38 The previous two paragraphs owe much to the exposition, and even the language, of Zahn in his remarkable discussion of these two chapters of the Apocalypse (12-13) in his *Offenbarung des Johannes*, vol. 2. I have tried to give in a few lines the gist of several pages. Zahn takes the "Man-child" of chapter 12 as a company of Jewish Christians of the End-time. This may be compared with some good remarks of Sir R. Anderson's *Coming Prince*, pp. 179-80, where he tentatively suggests that a Jewish prince of the End-time is in view. The subject is very difficult, and it is not easy to get away from Alford's exegesis, "the Man-Child is the Lord Jesus Christ, and no other."

39 The spirit of the chapter is deplorable. The sophistry is serious enough, and the extreme ill-feeling towards his opponents ("brayings of ignorance," "antagonists of the truth," p. 154, etc.) can be passed over. But there is worse; for he comes nigh to unscrupulousness in his arguing. On pp. 198-9 he argues as if we who find Jewish Christians in Palestine at the End-time really believe that "all the Christians in the world will gather at that spot above all others"--Judæa. What yokel among his opponents ever proposed this? Again, without drawing distinctions, he fastens on opponents the crude and offensive interpretation of some of the Fathers and Reformers, as well as Erasmus, that in the Parable of the Carcass and the Vultures (Matt. 24:28; Luke 17:37) the Carcass represents our Lord and the Vultures the Raptured saints. Why did he not give chapter and verse

Coming Again, he has another chapter of thirty-four pages given up to the same subject. He ranges over the O.T. and various parts of the New. At the end of the lecture in the former volume he says, "I should be obliged to anyone who will produce me other passages that refer to it; but I am not aware of them" (p. 235). I have obliged him by producing two whole chapters, or nearly so, that describe the nature and course of the Great Tribulation. Symbols apart, a child can understand them. But nothing will induce Mr. Kelly to look at them.

By aggressive sophistry and fantastic exegesis he transforms the Great Tribulation in Matthew 24:21 into "a deadly scourge upon the ungodly and apostate Jews," into desolation by "the Assyrian scourge," into "chastisement for the Jewish Nation," into an instrument of God to afflict the apostate Jews (pp. 222, etc.). One can grant that scourging and chastisement explain some things in the Apocalypse and in Palestine in the Last Days, but most emphatically it is to be said that they do not explain Revelation 12-13 [and] Matthew 24:4-28. Neither Assyrian, nor scourge of God, nor apostate Jews, nor judicial chastisement, nor desolator, nor Jewish Nation, nor godly Remnant is mentioned from beginning to end of those passage of Scripture. The Great Tribulation of Matthew 24:21-24 is fully explained in Revelation 7:9-17 and Revelation 13. The reason of it all is simply that the days are terribly evil; Antichrist and his Prophet will be in the ascendant. The saints will all be "nonconformists." That will be their peril, for it will bring on them the wrath of the Man of Sin. Hence the Great Tribulation.

And that persecution by the Antichrist will be but the climax of all the persecutions of the Church at the hands of the world-power. Our Lord Himself made reference to the cause and motive of the Great Tribulation. After speaking of the signs of the End-time He says: "And ye shall be hated of all men *for my Name's sake*" (Luke 21:17; cf. vv. 12-13). Again: "And ye shall be hated of all men *for my Name's*

for the interpretations instead of leaving the reader to believe that they came from anti-Darbyist writers? Dr. Harold Smith, in his monumental work *The Ante-Nicene Exegesis of the Gospels* (6 vols.) gives no instance of Patristic (Ante-Nicene) interpretation. Plummer in *ICC* on Luke gives St. Cyril of Alexandria and St. Ambrose of Milan as adopting it. He naturally rejects it as unsuitable. Meyer, on Matt. 24:28, gives a list of several fathers and Reformers and Catholics who also adopted it. He strongly condemns it. I doubt very much whether a single expositor of this age of scientific exegesis (say, since Winer, DeWette, Meyer and Lightfoot) has adopted it. It is not fair to leave the impression that opponents of the pre-tribulation Rapture, opponents of Kelly and Darby, accepted it.

Since writing the above, I have found full reference to the interpretation in Seiss's *Apocalypse*, ii., pp. 67-70, where he gives a long list of expositors from Origen to Wordsworth who accepted it. Seiss admits that it is repellent that our Lord should be represented as a dead body and His saints as birds of prey; yet he accepts it! But it is to be pointed out that Seiss was substantially a pre-trib, holding to a pretribulation rapture of Christians found watching. It is hard to omit saying that, with great exegetes like Godet, Zahn, and others, the carcass represents apostate humanity at the End, and the vultures the angels of judgment. Then again (p. 227) Kelly seems totally unwilling to see that it is not essential to his opponents' case to assert that the multitude of Rev. 7:9-17 is *the whole* Church of all ages since Pentecost. Up to the time of R.V. of verse 14, that inference was natural. Since then all that is vital to our case is that the victorious multitude there is the Christian martyrs of the Great Tribulation seen in heaven in a disembodied state after falling in that trial. Not the whole Church but a glorious part of it. The relation of this multitude to the blessed dead of all generations is discussed by Zahn and others, but cannot be dealt with here.

sake; but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. 10:22).

Yes, the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the devotion of Christians to it are what bring on the last great trial; and we know that this has been the cause of tribulation all down the centuries.

To be sure, there will be desolating judgments upon the Jews for their acceptance of Antichrist, but they are distinct from the wrath of Antichrist against the saints. The providential judgments upon the mass of unbelieving Jews are to be seen in the plagues, which, many believe, will be executed instrumentally through the Two Witnesses. But it is an unintelligent position to confuse the persecution of believers by the Man of Sin with the judgment of his followers by the hand of God.

One other line of argument used to free the Church from the Great Tribulation is an unabashed appeal to ignorance and prejudice. "The Church is a heavenly people in union with Christ. How horrible and unfitting, therefore, that she should be exposed to the dreadful hour of trial under the Devil.

Yes, "how horrible and unfitting" that the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the Body, should have been spat upon, nailed to the gibbet as a malefactor, and have suffered at the hands of the Devil! "How horrible and unfitting" that the very founders of the Church should have been beheaded and crucified at the instigation of the Devil through the sixth head of the world-power, which, in the Apocalypse, is called "the Beast." Moreover, all the objections that pre-tribs urge as necessitating the exemption of the Church from the Great Tribulation apply with equal force to securing the exemption of the saints of Revelation 7:9-17 from the same trial. They are a heavenly people, an election of Jews and Gentiles out of all tribes and nations, redeemed by the blood of Christ and saved by grace. They too are precious to the Saviour. If it is too horrible to think of the Church in the last crisis, then why is it not too horrible to conceive of the multitude of Revelation 7:9-17 in the same trial? Why cannot theorists spare some pity for the martyrs of the End-time and free them also from affliction?

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

All this prejudice against the truth in question springs from two causes. First, a misconception of the nature of the tribulation. This I have dealt with. Secondly, from the Church's having forgotten what persecution is. Hence it is that even Christians who, we may be sure, would gladly die for the Name of the Lord Jesus, are the very ones who are now so horrified at what they call "the hideous nightmare of the tribulation,"⁴⁰ and gravely inform us that they would "rather die than embrace such teaching." Rather die than embrace a truth taught by the Lord Himself? Rather die than abandon their precious theories of the Rapture!

40 Sir R. Anderson

May I, before closing, offer a few words of explanation in regard to the circumstances leading to the production of this volume? I do so with reluctance, but others have urged it upon me as an obligation I owe to the reader.

It is related that in the eighteenth century two English Deists met and agreed to write treatises to overthrow the narratives of the resurrection of Christ and the conversion of Paul. They agreed to study the subjects and write their respective treatises. When they met later, each was astonished to find that careful study of the subject had changed the views of both, and that the treatises they had written maintained the truth that each had agreed to assail, instead of overthrowing it.

My experience in the writing of the present volume has been somewhat similar. The course of study that led to the writing of it began when I was a sincere supporter of the new theories on the prophetic future. In my early Christian life I had been thrown into circles where not only the Lord's Coming but also the new views on it were firmly held. The joy of learning the truth of Christ's coming again, coupled with the light that an understanding of Israel's position in the counsels of God shed upon the prophetic page, was such that I did not stop to examine all the presuppositions underlying the theories that I accepted. Hence, in accepting the ideas that the *Coming* is for the Church and the *Appearing* for Israel and the world; that Matthew 24 is "Jewish" in such a sense that it cannot concern the Church or any portion of it; that the Elect in the Great Tribulation are Jews; and that 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 is a special Coming for the Church before the Seventieth Week of Daniel and different from the Coming of the *Son of Man*, I thought I was accepting truths as well-established in Scripture as the main fact of Christ's return, the seeing of which had been extremely helpful.

My mentor (then an Anglican Christian, now a noble Brethren missionary in Mongolia) did not make it clear, when giving me valuable instruction, that the correlative term of "Jew" is not "Christian" but "Gentile"; that a man may be both Jew and Christian but not both Jew and Gentile--so that when we say of the "coloring" in Matthew 24 "it is all Jewish," we ought to mean "it belongs to the land of Israel. It cannot possibly apply to Maoriland, New York, or Timbuktu." But in fact what happens always is this: the mentor, admiringly following William Kelly and Dr. Gaebelein, or carried away by their gifts as expositors and by their sophistry, says to his pupil: "This is all Jewish. It has nothing to do with the Church. To introduce the Church is utter confusion." And since Logic is not a fruit of the Spirit, the trick is done. Careful mentors must learn to say, "This is Jewish. The Lord in His grace remembered the peculiar situation of His saints in the thick of the trial. He instructed His church in Judæa how to act when the Man of Sin seats himself as God in the Temple.⁴¹ It must flee to the mountains, for the day of witness for them has passed. God is now to do a new work in Israel. The Two Witnesses, by prayer, by power, by a new testimony, will gather out the 144,000 pious Israelites to be a nucleus of the Nation when the Son of Righteousness arises with healing in His wings."⁴²

41 Matt. 24:15; cf. 2 Thess. 2:3-8.

42 Another legend that is totally inadequate to distinguish things that differ is: "the Jew, the Gentile and the Church of God." John in the Apocalypse gives us: (a) local congregations at Ephesus, etc. (2-3); (b) the Bride, the Church of the Elect (19:7-9); (c) apostate Israel (signified by the part of the Temple trodden underfoot, 11:2); (d) the 144,000 pious Israelites in the Land of Israel (=the measured part of the Temple, 11:1); 7:1-8; and probably 14:1-5; (e) the Israelitish Church or the Sun-clad Woman (12; cf. Matt. 24:15-26); (f) the rest of her seed: Gentile Christians among the Nations (12:17-13); (g) the Martyrs of the present period (6:9-11); of the End-time (7:9-17; 15:2-5); of all time (20:4). Zahn, Nathaniel West, Dr. W. G. Moorehead and many German exegetes

Being young and inexperienced, I supposed also that the new views were a return to those held by Christians in Apostolic times and by the sub-Apostolic Church, and that people who taught that the Church would pass through the Great Tribulation under Antichrist were singular persons and much misled. Such, at any rate, was my position on entering the Divinity School for further preparation for the ministry. And here my first shock was to find that the saintly scholar who presided over the School, while looking for the Saviour's Return, believed that Antichrist would come first and that the Church of the Last Days would be exposed to the Great Tribulation. Being thoroughly grounded in the new theories, I concluded that my teacher was neither "clear" nor "sound" on the subject! My mortification was greater when I learned that our professor had, earlier in life, held to the pre-trib theories but, after careful study, had subsequently abandoned them as unscriptural. This, I thought, was lamentable. And even although the scholar in question wrote a volume on the Book of Revelation embodying his ideas, I left the Divinity School unconvinced and unimpressed by the scheme.

During my divinity course I had made urgent representations to Sir Robert Anderson (whose *Gospel and Its Ministry*, *Coming Prince* and *Human Destiny* I thought highly of) that he should write a volume similar to his *Human Destiny* refuting the principal errors on the Lord's Coming. He sent word to me that he would keep the matter in mind, and Miss Habershon wrote to me that she had suggested to Sir Robert a list of the necessary chapters for the book. In due time it appeared--*Forgotten Truths*--which I have unfortunately had to criticize unfavorably in this volume.

The activities of missionary work kept the subject in the background for some time until I found that much interest prevailed on the subject among the people to whom I ministered. They were specially interested in the subject of the Apocalypse and the predictions concerning Antichrist. Some of this interest was wholesome, some was not; all of it needed direction. One thing was evident. I myself needed to be sure of my own position before teaching others. Something made me willing to admit that if the pre-trib views that I believed in were Scriptural, they could stand the test of a searching and impartial inquiry to find out the truth. Hence I began to search the Scriptures afresh. But after reading Anderson's admirable volume, *The Coming Prince*, and Kelly's *Lectures on The Second Coming and Kingdom*,⁴³ I became more than ever confirmed in my old position. The inquiry was dropped in the press of work.

Some time later I was reading Tregelles' volume *Remarks on the Prophetic Visions of Daniel*. Great

combine (d) and (e) to give a Christian Jewish Church of the End. This agrees with Sir R. Anderson's view. But following Tregelles and Dr. W. J. Erdman, I find less difficulty in taking (e) as the Christian Church of Judæa, which is sheltered in the wilderness during the 1,260 days of the Great Tribulation, and (d) as pious Israelites in the Land protected against death and apostasy, but only converted at 14:1-5. In other words, it is a Jewish *National Remnant*. But the "sealing" of chap. 7:1-8 is widely taken as conversion to Christ, effected by the ministry of the Two Witnesses of 11. The exigencies of controversy, I fear, hinder us all in taking an impartial view. There is a remarkable chapter on the 144,000 in West's *Thousand Years*.

43 I did not see then that Kelly added to [his] great gifts as an expositor the same defect in logical reasoning as Canon A. C. Deane remarked [noted] in J. H. Newman's *Apologia*; the author made the unproved assertion of one page the presupposition of his reasoning in the next. Kelly's powerful advocacy contained other controversial artifices, but his aggressive sophistry [deception/subtle argument] was the most pronounced.

was my embarrassment on reading his exposition of the resurrection in chapter 12:1-3, to find that his case in insisting on a literal resurrection of the saints at the time of Antichrist's destruction could not be easily disposed of. It seemed, in fact, unanswerable. I turned to Kelly's *Notes on Daniel*, but such was the distortion of Scripture employed that doubts began to arise in my mind about the case that needed it. A thorough study of the Scriptures in regard to the resurrection soon showed me that the pre-trib position of a resurrection seven years or more before the conversion of Israel, the destruction of Antichrist, and the inauguration of the Kingdom, was nowhere taught in Scripture, since everywhere the resurrection was located at the Day of the Lord. This consideration convinced me that there were fundamental errors in the pre-trib school, and a careful study of all the passages on the Rapture and allied themes also convinced me that the new scheme can only be maintained by swallowing at the outset some presuppositions on Matthew 24 that are incapable of proof, and by dexterously smoothing over a thousand inconsistencies and difficulties. The study that began in the hope that it might eventually lead to a modest contribution in support of the Darbyist scheme of the prophetic future ended in one that aims at supplanting it by "the faith that once he destroyed."

I am not wishing to lord my experience over the reader. I merely wish to show him that the assertion of pre-trib writers that those who differ from them are lacking in light and knowledge of dispensational truth is unfounded. Some of us were thoroughly initiated into all the intricacies of dispensational truth and could give points, and a beating perhaps, to many. We held just as firmly as they do to their dispensational method. But while we still hold that if we "distinguish the dispensations the Scriptures harmonize" (as Augustine is alleged to have said), and rejoice in seeing the distinction between the position and blessedness of Israel and that of the Church, we [nevertheless] quite deliberately reject the dispensational theories propounded first about 1830 as innovations that a careful and unbiased study of the Scriptures not only does not sustain but exposes at every turn.

It is told of an ancient king of Athens that he was able to emerge from a vast labyrinth by winding up a reel of cotton that he had unwound as he entered it. And the present writer had a similar experience on alighting from a train in the tropics and facing a journey of two hundred miles inland from the railhead. Bypaths and crossroads abounded to puzzle even experienced travelers. When I asked a teamster to instruct me about the roads, he replied: "There are too many wrong roads to explain to you. But if you follow the streak of cotton across the hinterland. you cannot go wrong." And sure enough, the tufts of cotton at the roadside, which the brambles and thorns had seized from bales of cotton as they passed on the mules going to the railway, formed a perfect clue, and the goal was reached without mishap.

In the labyrinth of prophetic facts and theories, I confidently recommend to the honest inquirer a shining clue that will not fail him. It is the resurrection of the saints. Let him courageously and impartially examine the setting of Isaiah 25:8, 26:19; Daniel 12:1-3, 13; Matthew 13:43; Luke 14:14; John 6:39-54; Romans 11:15; 1 Corinthians 15:54, 23; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 11:15-18, 2:4-6; and he will shed forever the pleasing delusion that the saints are raised and raptured out of the world before the coming of Antichrist, shed forever the fiction that Antichrist arises after Messiah's *Parousia* and Day.

A hard saying, that. Yet there is not the slightest doubt that the substitution of a secret rapture of the Church (providing a delectable escape for the saints in the Last Days) for the Blessed Hope, which Paul tells us is the Glorious Appearing of our Lord, is "a fond thing, vainly invented." It would be a very comforting truth if it were true; as it is not, we are safe in discarding it. If the Lord's Coming is as "imminent" as pre-tribs have been assuring us for a hundred years, the theory is a dangerous innovation

that ought to be exposed. It has had too long a vogue [mania] already.

In addition to the satisfaction of looking for Christ in a Scriptural and not a sentimental way, there are important advantages from accepting the primitive [first in existence] attitude toward Christ's Second Coming.

1. The writings of the New Testament, and especially the Gospels and Apocalypse, possess now a greater simplicity than under the theorists' schemes. We now read in the Gospels the words of Him who addressed members of the Church of God and prepared them for the task of evangelizing the world. We are delivered now from the Judaizing system of interpreting the discourses of Christ. Instead of handing them over to the semi-converted Jews, ignorant of Christ and redemption, we shall apply them to Christians who know and love Christ, always remembering that there are many passages that presuppose the existence of a Jewish Christian Church in Palestine at a past or future epoch of its history, a Church necessarily under the Law of the land yet rejoicing only in Christ Jesus as the Saviour and Shepherd of Israel.

The Scripture doctrine of Christ's Return delivers us from the house of bondage in which the dispensationalists would lock us. We do not say now in reading the New Testament, "that is for the Jews," "that is in Matthew's Gospel." We say rather, "that was spoken to the Apostles by the Lord Jesus; therefore it deeply concerns me or my brethren in Christ." The Lord Himself bade the Apostles teach their converts "to observe all thing whatsoever" He had commanded them (Matt. 28:20).

2. I think that the Scriptural view of Christ's Return is more calculated to gain the assent of thoughtful Christians than the nineteenth-century scheme we have examined. Premillennialism never had a greater millstone round its neck than the mass of vagaries [whims] that the new scheme propounds to us. Think of having to defend theories that are associated in many minds with propositions like these (sponsored by eminent names)

"The approaching Advent of Christ will be secret, and all Christians will be secretly snatched away to Heaven."

"Matthew's Gospel was written for the Jews" (its unsuitability for Gentile Christians being taken for granted).

"The Church is not in Acts before Paul."

"The Four Gospels do not contain 'Church' Teaching."

"The Body of Christ is not in the Apocalypse."

"The Great Commission refers to the witness of the Jewish Remnant in the End-time, before its own regeneration."

"The use of the Lord's Prayer by Christians is unchristian."

"Israel's deepest blindness will happen *after* the approaching Day of Messiah, after the Glorious Appearing of Jehovah-Jesus in Titus 2:13."

"The First Resurrection is not the first but the second."

"The vision of Revelation 7:9-17 gives an earthly scene."

"The twelve Apostles are not in the Body [the church]."

"The Church cannot be the Bride because she is the Body."

"Antichrist rises and triumphs after the *Parousia* of Christ."

"The New Jerusalem is 'Jewish.'"

I do not wonder now that the subject of the Second Coming is avoided in some quarters when assertions such as these are given forth as "subjects of Divine revelation" (Dr. Bullinger).

3. The doctrine of the Lord's Coming becomes a much less intricate and speculative subject than it is in pre-trib literature. The simple Christian will not now approach the New Testament with paste and scissors to "divide" the word of truth into fragments--this beatitude for the Remnant, that for the Church; this Scripture to the second, that to the third, and that to the fourth Coming of Christ. He will take up the New Testament and find there some hundreds of references to the Second Coming of Christ at the Day of the Lord, which will be preceded, accompanied, and succeeded by many events in relation to Israel, the Church, and the Nations.

There will not be lacking many to rail at him for his slow wit and wrong-headedness. But let him not waver nor be afraid! "Simplex veri sigillum"--*Simplicity is the seal of the truth.*

In the Hibbert Lectures for 1934, Dr. Albert Schweitzer, the famous scholar, musician, and medical missionary, uttered some striking words on the spirit of the age: "The spirit of the age dislikes what is simple; it no longer believes that what is simple can be profound. It loves what is complicated, and regards it a profound."⁴⁴

This is a perfect description of the attitude of pre-tribs to prophetic interpretation--and speculation. They revel in the complicated, the uncommon, and the marvelous. An explanation that is far-fetched and beneath the surface takes precedence over one that is simple, obvious, and pedestrian. We meet it everywhere--in the Gospels, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse. The ordinary interpretation of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, with its lesson of neighborly concern and loving service for the wreckage of society, was too prosaic and humdrum. The presence of a Levite and a Priest passing coldly by on the other side of the road was too great a temptation for Evangelicals to miss. They must make the Parable say that Sacerdotalism cannot save, and that the Good Samaritan typifies the Saviour, who can. Sound Truths these, but not taught and not implied in this parable. So also with the "Parable" of the Sheep and the Goats in Matthew 25:31-46. For one who comes to it to drink deeper of the Saviour's spirit of philanthropy toward the hungry, the sick, the ill-clad, and the imprisoned, a thousand come to it as a problem in dispensationalism; and we all want to fit it into our scheme of the End and especially to "dish" the foes of Chiliasm.

Ask Sir R. Anderson,⁴⁵ Dr. Gaebelein,⁴⁶ or Andrew Jukes⁴⁷ to explain the difference between the "gospel of God" and the "gospel of the kingdom," the word of God" (Luke 8:12) and the "word of the kingdom" (Matt. 13:19), the "kingdom of God" and the "kingdom of heaven" (Matt. *passim*), and we are treated to an astonishing display of exegetical hair-splitting "rightly dividing the word of truth." In reality, it is like nothing so much as the incident that Dr. James Robertson tell of in his *Early Religion of Israel*: an Oriental was asked where his ear was. He stretched out his right arm, wheeled it gracefully over his head, and pulled at his left ear. Simplicity came to him unnaturally.

44 Reported in the "British Weekly," Oct. 25, 1934.

45 See the *Distinction Between the Kingdom of Heaven, The Kingdom of God, and The Church, Forgotten Truths, and Unfulfilled Prophecy.*

46 See *The Gospel of Matthew*, 2 vols., *passim*.

47 See *Characteristic Differences in the Four Gospels.*

I have already passed on some dispensational truths that are hidden from the ordinary pre-trib through his devotion to a theory or his ignoring the works of giants like Deissmann, Dalman, Zahn, and others. I propose to pass on another. In spite of Dr. Gaebelein and Sir R. Anderson, there is nothing very subtle or marvelous in Matthew's use of the expressions "kingdom of heaven" instead of "kingdom of God" and "word of the kingdom" instead of "word of God." Each pair of phrases is identical in meaning with the other; but Dr. Dalman, in his great work *The Words of Jesus*, has shown that Matthew, writing for Jews, *who detested the excessive use of the Divine Name*, fell in with the national predilection for using evasive terms. "Heaven" and "Kingdom" were used instead of "God." Dr. Dalman shows that there were many such evasive terms in use and employed throughout the Gospels, especially by Matthew. Like a wise missionary, he considered the susceptibilities of his constituency. We see the same thing in translating works from continental languages into English. The flippant and irreverent use of God's Name in scores of exclamations is mostly spared us in the translations. They are toned down to suit a different attitude on such things. The third commandment still runs. Dalman's explanation is as simple as it is satisfactory. Yet it can only be disappointing to dispensationalists with their love of the complicated, which they think is profound.⁴⁸

Similarly when we see the Israelitish *Church* in Judæa in Matthew 24:16 and Revelation 12, and see that the Elect of Matthew 24:21-31 are the same as the Elect (chosen) in Matthew 22:14--the saved of this Dispensation independent of all nationality--how clear the discourse on the Last Things becomes! All that happens is that a delectable theory of the End gives place to one that is rugged and scriptural; one that is complicated and dependent on prophetic lecturers and experts to explain yields to another that our Lord Himself made so clear and simple for the whole of His flock "that he may run that reads it" (Hab. 2:2).

4. I am well aware that the conclusions reached in this volume will cause grief to many whose good opinion I greatly value. But the interests of the truth demand that, where we see a wrong doctrine held, it should be refuted and replaced by the true one. The fact that the wrong theory is held by multitudes of godly people renders the need of correcting it all the more clamant [urgent], for others may be led into worse error by the logical application of principles that led the more godly ones astray. Indeed, this has already happened. And one must maintain that the main error of pre-tribs' central position is sufficiently serious to warrant an exposure of it.

It has not been a congenial task to deal with the hope of Christ's Return in a controversial tone. It has been distasteful to hurt the feelings of some to whom, on other subjects, I am indebted. I should have preferred to deal with the subject in a less argumentative way; but the extent to which an erroneous theory has been accepted--a theory, moreover, that has become derogatory to the authority of Christ and His word--renders a pretty exhaustive exposure of it necessary. Peaceful pamphlets having been ignored, it has been necessary to get down into the trenches of error and dig it out. If the present volume should lead some to re-examine a scheme to which they have given an all too hasty acquiescence and to embrace the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the subject, the time spent in its preparation will have been amply repaid.

48 In *Judaism in the N.T. Period*, R. Travers Herford, a high authority on Judaism, takes the same view. He gives examples (the avoidance of Jahveh, etc.) and adds: "The modes of address just mentioned were intended to avoid the necessity of directly naming God. With the same intention the word 'Heaven' was substituted for 'God' in such phrases as 'The Kingdom of Heaven' (=God)" (p. 90.).

5. In looking for our Lord according to His word, after the fulfillment of certain signs and events, we do not postpone the Lord's Return. The signs help us to watch more intelligently. They quicken our hopes that the Lord, who comes to relieve the sorrow of the world and establish the kingly rule of Christ (which, as Zahn beautifully puts it, "is limited in time, but broadens out into eternity,"⁴⁹) may be near. In truth, it is the accusers who, by putting off the fulfillment of the predicted signs until after an imaginary any-moment Coming which never eventuates, postpone the Advent. The Scriptures hold out the Glorious Appearing of Christ as a present hope to Christians. Darby admitted that it was to the Early Church; how much more may it be to us upon whom the ends of the Age would seem to have come--for the very signs that our Lord Jesus Christ held out as beacon lights to guide us indicate that this Coming has drawn nigh, and that our salvation is nearer than when we believed.

The following words of Mr. Spurgeon, written nearly two generations ago, bear eloquent testimony to this and will be welcome to many:

Our Lord may come right soon; certain signs raise our hopes very high. The love of many waxes cold, and the devil is doubly busy; and this last is no doubtful sign. When you see a farmer beginning to burn the gates and break down the hedges, and unroof the barns, and so on, you say, "That fellow's lease is run out." Satan has great wrath when he knows that his time is short. In the case of the demoniac child, we read, "As he was yet a-coming the devil threw him down and tare him." He knew that he was about to be expelled, and so did his worst. The double veiling of the heavens only brings on that darkest part of the night which precedes the dawn of day. When the tale [tally] of bricks is doubled Moses appears, and the same is true of our still greater Deliverer. Let us take courage and be of good heart; for while we lift Christ on high, and glorify His name, He is on the way to take up the quarrel of His covenant and rout His foes.⁵⁰

Equally beautiful and inspiring are the following words of one of the greatest Hebrews preachers in the history of the Church. They may fitly close the volume:

Christians "see the day approaching," for they love Christ's Appearing, and to them the day of light is not far off. Jesus said, "I come quickly." The long delay of centuries does not contradict this "Quickly." Christ is looking forward unto His return, and unto nothing else. All events only prepare and further this great consummation. And the Christians of every period recognize that the mystery of ungodliness is already working, and that our only hope is the return of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Let this hope separate us from the evil which is in the world, and strengthen and gladden us in all our sorrows and difficulties; let it bind us together in the fellowship and ministry of love. Let us exhort one another daily by word and example.⁵¹

49 *INT*, vol. 3, p. 401.

50 Cited by A. J. Gordon, "Things to Come," iii., p. 7.

51 Adolph Saphir: *Hebrews*, ii., p. 236.