

THE CHURCH AND THE TRIBULATION

By

ROBERT GOVETT

BOOK MARKS

1. THE FIRST COMPANIONSHIP
2. THE SECOND COMPANIONSHIP
3. THE THIRD COMPANIONSHIP
4. REVELATION CHAPTERS 2&3
5. THE THRONE AND ELDERS: CHAPTERS 4&5
6. THE GREAT MULTITUDE: 7 : 9-17
7. THE MAN-CHILD: REVELATION CHAPTER 12
8. THE FIRST-FRUITS OF REVELATION CHAPTER 14
9. THE HARVEST

The writer has heard and read a good deal about 'the rapture of the Church' but he never yet saw the passage of Scripture which speaks of it. He admits with thankfulness the glorious place which God has given to believers of this dispensation. But he has never yet beheld the passage which states that all the members of Christ will at one time be rapt to Christ ; and that this is one of the privileges attached to simple saving faith in Christ. Let us then look into the matter.

First of all, neither of the two Epistles which speak of the 'Church' mention the rapture.

1. Paul in Ephesians tells us of God's gracious counsels toward the Church, the body of the Risen Head. He does not name the rapture. That silence then gives us to understand, that the rapture is not one of the privileges attached to this wonderful calling. 'Oh, but the reason why it is not named is because we are there considered as being already in the heavenly places with Christ:' Eph. 2: 6. Could not the Holy Spirit, when telling us of God's counsel concerning the fullness of times (1: 10) have thrown in a clause, stating that by the one all-inclusive rapture saints would enter it? Was there no other way in which the All-wise God could show us, in the same epistle, both privileges, if they were really attached to simple faith?

2. There is no notice given in the Colossians that the rapture is one of the privileges belonging to simple faith in Christ. 'How can you say so? when it is written there - "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory:" Col. 3: 4. Now in order that the saints may appear on high with Christ He must have previously come for them. Moreover God has already translated believers into the kingdom of the Son of His love : 1: 13.' It is true, that all believers are translated as soon as they believe, into the kingdom in mystery, during the present time of grace. But the rapture takes place in another day of an opposite character ; in the day of justice, when each is to be rewarded according to his works : Matt. 12: 18-26 ; 2 Thess. 1: 5 ; 1 John 4: 17. Of which more by and by. And the question is, Will all believers enter the kingdom in manifestation?

Next, the Epistle to the Colossians has some strong warnings of possible loss to the believer arising from disobedience. Let us look at them. The apostle tells us of believers already reconciled to God through the death of His Son, and of their presentation, "holy and unblameable and irreprovable in His sight, IF AT LEAST ye (1) continue in the faith grounded and settled, (2) and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel which ye have heard:" Col. 1: 22, 23. Now, are all believers grounded and settled in the faith? Have none been moved from the hope of the Gospel? Do not many refuse the, personal coming of Christ at, any moment, and look rather for death as their hope ?

Again, after presenting to the believer the glory of the Mystery of God and the necessity of our cleaving to Christ as Head, what says He? "Beware lest any man spoil (rob) you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ : " Col. 2: 8. Are there no Christians led away from simplicity in Christ to philosophy and the traditions of men? These then will suffer loss as it regards the Christian's reward and

hopes. The believer is to remember his completeness in Christ, with whom he was - buried in baptism, wherein also he rose again, by faith in the operation of God, who raised him from the dead: Col. 2: 12. Here again is another opening for loss. How few have been immersed after their faith in Christ buried, and raised again! And if Moses, God's commissioned deliverer of Israel, had nearly been slain by the Lord because of his neglect of the first rite of the law (Exod. 4: 24-26), how much more shall these lose privileges attaching to obedience, in the day of the Lord?

But the inspired warning to disciples steps in again. "Let none beguile you of your reward in a voluntary (affected) humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by the mind of his flesh, and not holding the Head, out of which all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. IF, therefore, ye died Christ," why listen to the commands of men, as if in the world? They may have a show of wisdom, but as being to the satisfaction of the flesh, are not to be honoured by any Christian. "If, therefore, ye rose with the Christ, seek the things which are above." Set your affection there, and not on things of earth. For you died, and your true life is on high with Christ. And when He shall be manifested, then shall you too be : Col. 2: 18 ; 3: 4.

Here then is another opening of responsibility, at which disobedience may come in. Nay, all these warnings discover to us points at which many believers have actually gone astray. Hence they will not partake of the privileges attached to obedience. And this promised manifestation with Christ is presented in the hortatory part of the Epistle, under three 'ifs'. Moreover, the Epistle witnesses of certain sins on which the wrath of God is coming,* and into which many believers have fallen. It also assures us that while the obedient will receive the reward of the inheritance, yet that the wrongdoer, believer though he may be, shall receive for the wrong he has done ; and God is, in that day of justice, no respecter of faces: Col. 3: 22 ; 4: 1. According to deeds He will render to each, whether elect, or non-elect. While then all Christ's people are to be presented before Him "at His Presence", yet that does not decide the question, whether all believers will be rapt together. For "the Presence" of Christ covers a considerable space of time, * during which the Antichrist is manifested, and the Day of Great Trouble takes place. So that, during that time more raptures than one may take effect.

[* Ch. 3 : 6. "On the children of disobedience" is to be omitted here. See the critical editions of the New Testament. Wrath is coming on all doers of these evils.]

We come then to the passages which speak of rapture.

1. 1 Thess. ch. 4.

2. 2 Thess. ch. 2.

3. Matt. ch. 24. & ch. 25.

4. And the passages in Revelation: Rev. 3: 3, 10; 11: 12 ; 12: 14.

1. Let us look then at 1 Thess. 4: 13 - v. 8.

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

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

Now does this passage give us the rapture of the whole Church, as the result of grace to men possessed of faith? Nothing of the kind! It answers the question which was then troubling the Thessalonian Christians - Whether death and burial were not effectual hindrances to enjoying a place, in the millennial kingdom of Christ. And the answer is, 'By no means!' This physical barrier will in an instant be overcome by the power of Christ at His advent. The living will gain no step upon the departed; both will be secretly caught up ["in clouds"] to meet the Lord in air.'

May we now regard all modern Christians as occupying the same spiritual level with the Thessalonian Christians? Far from it! The Spirit of God praises their "work of faith, labour love, and patience of the hope of our Lord Jesus Christ." 3. Could Christ praise all believers thus? The Thessalonian Christians had "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus our deliverer from the wrath:" 1 Thess. 1: 9, 10. Now, are all converted persons serving God? Are they all waiting for God's Son from heaven? Are there not many who have turned away from the hope Christ's coming to idols, who will in consequence be left the coming day of wrath? Are there not converted men among the Ritualists who worship the bread and wine, the Virgin and the saints?

The world will be overtaken by the day of wrath ere they expect it. The Thessalonians would not, because they were awake to God's invitation to his kingdom and glory: I Thess. 2 12. But most Christians are not aware of what the hope of their calling is, and are not seeking it. The

majority of believers are spiritually asleep, like Sardis. And, as spiritually asleep, and like the world, they will be dealt with in the day of justice, as being of it. The rapture, as here shown, then, is something not attaching to the Church as a privilege of simple faith. The moral question is not directly touched on. But it is evident that Christians in general do not answer to the attainments of grace here given. And the raptures are in connection with the kingdom of glory, and the day of judgment, not with faith and eternal life.

2. What says the Second Epistle?

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him, ye be not soon shaken from your intelligence . . . as that the day of the Lord has set in," 2 Thess. 2: 1,2. See the critical editions.

Here is rapture of saints, but not of "the Church" as a body. Is the Church in general in the state of grace here depicted? "We are bound to thank God always for you brethren, as it is meet because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the love of one of you all toward each other aboundeth:" 2 Thess. 1: 3. These then were watchful saints, whom God was about "to count worthy of the kingdom", since they not only believed in it, but suffered for it, 2 Thess. 1: 5.

They had been troubled by means of false testimony from three different quarters, to the effect that that great and terrible period - "the Day of the Lord" had already set in. And, if so, they were called to hide and to howl: Isa. ch. 2. And ch. 13. But no! This time of the Church's recognition by God is the day of God's embassy of grace; and the day of justice cannot come without the watchful saints being caught away to the secret presence of Christ. The indignation of God cannot descend on the sinners of earth, till its sin has come to the height, and the False Christ, sweeping all the wicked into Satan's net, has appeared in his power.

But the Apostle does not say that none of the believers of the Church can be in that day. The contrary possibility was implied in the former epistle. It is implied here. While watchful saints, such as the Thessalonian Christians and Paul, who joins himself with them, would not be left on earth, he intimates the possibility of the unwatchful being left to that day. The opening for this appears in the word "soon". He does not say, 'that no evidence ought to prevail on the Christian to believe, that the dread day of God has begun; because none of the Church will be caught in that day.' He only gives them indications of the evidence which should convince any believers so left, that the day had begun. They were not soon to be frightened out of their wits, as if the day had begun.

Before the wrath of the day be poured out, the waiters for Christ will be caught up to Him. Therefore, until a rapture of saints has taken place, we may be sure that the day of grace is lasting still. But as soon as the sudden disappearance of the watchful saints has taken place, all believers left on earth may know that the Christ is secretly present, and the day of woe has set in. The removal of the watchful and prayerful ones will hasten on the full iniquity of earth. The Holy Spirit returns on high; He who now hinders the spirit of lawlessness will have departed. And with the removal of "the light of the world", the world plunges into its deepest darkness. By

the removal of the salt of the earth, the earth sinks into its deepest corruption. The careless and lukewarm believer, as the salt that has lost its taste, no longer retains his place, but is cast out and trodden underfoot : Matt. 5: 13, 14. Speedily will come the rejection by whole nations of the name of Christian, and out of that open wickedness and lawlessness springs the Lawless One, whom Christ at last 'paralyses by the manifestation of his presence', which had so long taken place over earth in secret.

Let us now look at the evidence derived from our Lord's prophetic parable: Matt. 24: 36-42. "The Days of Noah."

"But of that day and hour knoweth none, no, not the angels of the heavens, but my Father only.

"But as the days of Noah were,

1. "So shall be also THE PRESENCE of the Son of Man. "For as in the days that were before the Flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage "Until the day that Noah entered into the ark, "And they understood (it) not, "Until the Flood came, and took away all. "So shall be also THE PRESENCE of the Son of Man. "Then two shall be in the field; one is taken, and one is left. Two (women) grinding at the mill; one is taken, and one is left."

How are we to understand this parable? On two accordant principles. 1. This is THE PRESENCE parable. 2. It is to be interpreted by the HISTORY OF NOAH.

The points of resemblance between the days of Noah, and the times yet future, as declared in the parable, are these :- (1) The time of God's patience, in which we stand. (2) judgment is threatened now, as it was by Noah then. (3) Mercy was promised to some before the judgment, and the instrument of that mercy was the ark. (4) Till judgment came, men expressed their unbelief by a life after the flesh. So it is now, and will be increasingly so. (5) The sign given of God was 'Noah's entry into the ark'. That was a sign to the world, of wrath at the doors. (6) It was God's last call to men to repent. But it was not understood, and passed unheeded, till judgment overwhelmed the unbelievers. (7) Then came destroying wrath on the world. (8) The answering sign then that is to be given what is it? The taking and leaving!

1. But how are we to expound these? Some say that it is the Jewish or earthly deliverance, that is here described. The taken are those cut off by judgment ; the left are those who survive the judgments, and people the millennial earth.

2. To me it is certain that the heavenly escape is before us; which is designed for the Church of Christ. The taking is the deliverance in mercy; the left, are those who have to pass through the Great Tribulation.

How shall the matter be decided?

1. The general subject of the prophecy on Olivet is our Lord's coming in reference to his two peoples: (1) Israel and (2) the Church. Now, in order to meet His coming aright, the Saviour has commanded believers to maintain the attitude watchfulness.

2. The Jewish deliverance is described in the first half of the prophecy. They are to escape by great activity. The sign once given, they are to flee without looking back : 16-18. In parable there is no activity on the part of the escaping. "One is taken, one is left." Both are passive. This then is not the Jewish, but the heavenly rescue.

3. Next, the word which describes the taking does not mean destroying. The reader must distinguish between two different words used in this parable. The one signifies "to take as a companion". That is the word employed concerning the one taken. The other signifies "to take away, to destroy". "The flood came, and took away them all". This is paralleled in Luke 17: 27, 29, by the usual word for "destroy". "One is taken", then, describes the favourable alternative. He is "taken as a companion". This is the usual sense of the word. So Abraham "took with him" to the Mount "two of his young men and Isaac his son" : Gen. 22: 3 (2,) So Joseph took five of his brethren to the royal presence of Pharaoh: Gen. 47: 2. It is the same word which in the New Testament our Lord employs concerning his reception of His people. "I will come again and receive you to myself" : John 14: 3. For some other passages the reader may consult Acts 12: 25 ; 15: 37, 38 ; Gal. 2: 1 ; where there is an added preposition, which points out companionship still more definitely.* Moreover, the matter is to be expounded by the history of Noah. Now, in Noah's day the distinction of Jew and Gentile did not exist. The flood overswept the whole earth, and the witness of coming judgment embraced the whole earth.

The Saviour's title here is not Jewish. He calls Himself "Son of man". That is the title which he takes when He puts away his Jewish title: Matt. 16: 20, 27, 28. It is one which describes Him as acting upon the whole earth.

[* Two passages have been cited as exceptions to this sense: Matt. 27: 27 , and John 19: 6. Here wicked men took the Lord as their companion. But the question is easily decided by asking, Who takes here? It is the Lord of "the Presence" even as Noah was the taker of old.]

4. Watchfulness against an expert thief is not an attitude given to Israelites ; as it is here : v. 42. They are men of sight, not of faith. They are to flee when they SEE the idol lifted up on the temple. They are to see the Son of man coming in the clouds: Matt. 24: 15, 30.

5. The scene is to be expounded by the days of Noah. Was there any taking and leaving then? Yes! "Of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee. They shall be male and female ; of fowls after their sort, and of cattle after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee to keep them alive:" Gen. 6: 19, 20.

6. The taking then was by Noah, and in mercy. So was it also in the days of Lot, to which in the parallel passage of Luke 17. our Lord compares these days: Gen. 19: 16. "The angels laid hold" on Lot and his family and led them out from the place of danger.

The taking here is to be expounded by Noah's day. Who took? Noah! Who will take then? Christ! into whose "Presence" the saint is to be ushered. In the old-world escape, Noah and his family had to enter the refuge on their feet. For the ark was then on earth. But now the ark of our Noah is "the Presence" in the air. And into that our powers of natural progression will not enable us to climb. Therefore, the words describing the believer's entry on the Presence of Christ are passive. "Watch, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to be set before the Son of man": (Greek) Luke 21: 36. "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught away together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" : Thess. 4: 17. "Enoch walked God, and he was not; for God took him" : Gen. 5: 24.

7. The taking in Noah's day has two aspects, according as we look at it as affecting the taken, or the left. (1) To the taken, it was an escape from wrath. (2) To those left, it was a sign.

Observe, our Lord is referring, not to Noah's entry on the new earth after the Flood was past, but to his entering into the ark, in the days previous to the Flood ; and to the destruction wrought by the Flood on those outside the refuge of the ark. Those left where they were, perished. Those who perished were those who remained where they were, and who were not transferred to the new sphere of safety. Those left outside were the taken away by judgment. So the saved are the taken to Christ's Presence.

8. Whither were the rescued taken? To the ark. For what purpose? To be kept alive. They were led out of the place of sin, on which woe was coming, into the place of mercy. The left outside the ark on earth were left to the flood. There was then a needed transfer from the scene of trouble to the scene of peace. Noah and his saved ones abandoned their previous place to enter on the provided refuge. It is so here. The words, "The one was taken," denote the needed transfer out of the world, which lies under sin and death, into the Presence on high. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" : Ps. 91: 1-4. All others perished in the flood: Gen. 7: 23. "Thou shalt bring into the ark to keep them alive with thee." The taking then, as viewed in the light of Christ's choice of his companions to enter the Presence, is one of honour. Hence the leaving is comparative dishonour. Viewed as the act of Christ coming as the thief (v. 43), it has the same signification. The expert thief discriminates between the more and the less valuable article, and while he takes the one, he leaves the other.

9. Now, as he who was left outside the ark, was left to the terrors of the flood, so it is here. The one left must pass through the Great Tribulation, which answers to the flood of old. The feasters and the marrying ones are left outside the refuge, to pass through the day of trouble ; and the left one is left to the same time, and in the place of danger and dismay.

10. What was the time of that taking and that escape? "In the days that were before the Flood." So it is to be in the days that are coming. The taking is the sign of the coming judgment, and so cannot be the effect of the judgment already come. It is the deliverance out of the woe by Jesus. Now, as we are taught to pray, that we may be "accounted worthy" of this escape, so Paul comforts the watchful believer with the assurance of it. The Presence of Christ shall gather him to Himself, and so he shall not be in the tempest of that evil day. "Now we beseech you brethren, by the Presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled . . . as if the Day of the Lord (great and terrible) had set in" : 2 Thess. 2: 1.

11. Let us now regard the taking and the leaving as THE SIGN.

The entry of Noah and his family into the ark, conveying thither the furniture and crockery of their house, was a sign to the world. It said: 'The hundred and twenty years of God's promised patience are over. The clock of God is striking ; judgment is at the door!'

12. A sign was needed in order to show where our day of mercy ends, and "the days of vengeance" begin. The removal of the watchful of the Church tells men that the Church's standing and testimony are then by God removed. The Church is the witness of God's mercy; of the acceptable time ; of the day of salvation : 2 Cor. 5.

13. The sign in Noah's day was a disappearance of the favoured ones in the ark. It is so in the coming day. The taken is caught away to the Presence in the twinkling of an eye, and is no more seen. "He was not found, for God took him" : Gen. 5: 24.

14. The sign to the world in Noah's day was a miraculous one. That birds, beasts, reptiles, the wild and tame of every sort, should come, and in the prescribed numbers, trooping to the one refuge of the ark, was a miracle. The taking here is miraculous also. It is the Lord's lifting up to himself his people out of earth into heaven. In Luke 17. another feature of the wonder is given. From within the locked house and the barred chamber of midnight, one shall be stolen away; so that, in the morning, of two in the same bed only one shall be found. Walls, doors, and roof remain as they were, but this Master-thief has abstracted one of them : Luke 17: 34.

15. It is a sign to Israel. It is the sign of the unseen Presence. "Ye shall not see me till ye say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." They need then a sign of what they see not. It is the miraculous absence which betokens the heavenly Presence of the Son of man. One of God's two people is made a sign to the other. The rapture of one of the superior people into the heaven is the sign of Christ's love to his watchful saint ; a love greater far than that to Israel : Rev. 3: 10. It was also foretold that so it should be. "Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of Hosts" Isa. 8: 18. "What shall be the sign of thy Presence?" said the disciples to our Lord. Here it is given : 'As Enoch was taken to heaven, and as Elijah, so shall Christ's watchful ones he accounted worthy to disappear from earth.'

16. It is a sign also to the unbelievers of the world. It calls to them to cease marrying and feasting, to be upon their knees in sackcloth and ashes ; for the day of judgment on the living is come. But the men of the old world disregarded the sign given. They were so enwrapped in the things of time, as to be insensible to this call of the Most High. They had refused the testimony of wrath coming, and were blind to the meaning of its sign. It will be thus, when this marvellous sign shall be given. Faith will see in the sudden disappearance of the Lord's diligent seekers the reward which God gave of old. Faith will interpret it of the Lord's hand of power. But the men of unbelief will see in it only the fraud of men, and will ridicule the idea of a miracle. For nothing is seen. And they will lay themselves to slumber afresh, with 'Peace and Safety' on their lips, till judgment not to be escaped, swallows them up!

17. On the opposite view, the taking and the leaving are only the result of judgment in men's destruction, and therefore no sign at all. All are involved in the same tempest, and who is to be cut off and who is to be spared can only be known when the wrath is past.

18. Look also at the significance of the two in the light of Noah's day. "Of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee. They shall be male and female." "There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God commanded Noah." "They went in unto Noah into the ark two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life. And they that went in went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him, and the Lord shut him in:" Gen. 6: 19 ; 7: 9, 15. Accordingly we have "the two" prominent here, and the male and the female are set side by side. "Then shall Two (men) be in the field: one is taken and one is left. Two (women) grinding at the mill: one is taken, and one is left." Noah took only a selection from the animals, and those left outside the ark were cut off.

The same prominence is given to the two * in the rapture of Elijah. The two cross the Jordan, and are close one to the other, when a chariot of fire appears and Elijah is caught up by a whirlwind into heaven : 2 Kings 2. Four times in the Hebrew occur the "two".

[* Note. Here is a type of the selective rapture of believers. Elijah and Elisha were both prophets of God. (v. 12) - Ed.]

19. The two are quite distinct from the world in its feasting and marrying. They are of the poor, working in the sweat of their brow. And such are those whom in general God has chosen to His Kingdom and glory: Luke 6: 20. They are the few, in comparison of earth's many rioters. And it was the few (that is, eight souls) that were saved in the ark.

20. What shall we say is the spiritual character of the two? Are they to be distinguished thus? 'The taken is a believer the left one is an unbeliever.' No ; both are believers. This is proved by the closing words of the parable, "Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord is coming." This gives us the certain key to the interpretation. It is not the Lord in his sovereignty dealing with some in his good pleasure. Then the lesson would have been to bow with submission to Him who is not bound to render a reason of his dealings to any. But no! 'tis the

day of rewarding each according to his obedience to Christ. And so it is intimated, that the reason of the difference is, that the one is watchful, the other is not. Now, if they thus differ, both are believers. The same follows from the words, "Your Lord is coming." The Presence is the Presence of Christ "the Master" of both ; that is, both are his servants. Else the appropriate call to the one left had been to bid him turn to God. But the cry, "Watch", supposes the possession of life in both. They differ as the "ready" from the unready. Here again we tread on certain ground. That is the feature of the accepted of that day. "Therefore be ye also ready:" 44. "They that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. Afterwards came also the other virgins." Here is again the entry into the Presence of those rapt to Christ, and the left are the foolish, who are kept outside. But the distinction of "ready" and "unready" is not a radical difference, like that between the renewed and the ungodly. It is a circumstantial difference only; such as obtains between two believers, the one of whom accepts all Christ's truth, the other does not.

21. It has been proved, then, by many arguments, that the taking is the favourable alternative. The parable refers all to the Saviour's coming and presence ; and to be taken to that is honour and blessing. The being left, then, is dishonour and trouble. What in Noah's day came after the entry of the favoured ones into the ark? The Flood! The left one, then, if left for that which answers to the Flood, the period of the Great Tribulation to come.

Accordingly the parable which next follows, of the robbed householder, unfolds to us the case of the left one. He is dishonoured, for his Lord in choosing his companion has passed by himself. He has lost the hope given in prophecy. He has not "watched and prayed always" ; and as the consequence he cannot now escape the troubles coming on the world while his companion has been set before the Son of man with joy: Luke 21: 36. Had he been watchful, his house would not have been broken into. He differs from the favoured householder in having slept when he should have kept awake; and the issue is his being left amidst the increasing and out-bursting sinfulness of men, and the last judgments of God. The article

22. The same truth comes out in a view of the Steward : v. 45-51. That is not a Jewish parable. For God is not now, owning Israel. But there the steward is by Christ set over his household, and is recompensed according as he is watchful or not. The same thing appears on a study of the Virgins. That presents to us the presence of Christ, as it affects the dead in Christ; "the sleepers" of 1 Thess. 4. But I will not enter minutely into either of these.

23. This view of the taking and leaving is so greatly confirmed by three incidents of our Lord's life, which I call 'the Three Companionships', that in justice to the argument I must exhibit them. They are all - so important does the Holy Spirit consider them - narrated by the three first Gospels, and in each of the three incidents occurs the Greek word here used.

THE FIRST COMPANIONSHIP: Mark 5.; Matt. 9.; Luke 8.

Jesus has called a publican to be an apostle, and the men of the old covenant are stumbled at the Saviour's eating with sinners, a grace suited only to the new dispensation. He is advised to

give to His disciples orders to fast, as did the law and its followers. The Saviour refuses. The time was not suitable. Moreover, His doctrine was not a clearing of the law from the misapprehensions of its teachers; He brought an entirely new doctrine. And any attempt to mingle the new truths with the old rites would only bring destruction upon both.

Two incidents, then, at once occur to illustrate to us that the Saviour is ruler alike of the old things and the new. 1. He is asked to go and raise the dead ; and He leaves the house of the feast, in order to effect this purpose. 2. On the way, one unclean in the sight of the law, and unable to obtain a cure, touches the hem of our Lord's robe and is healed at once. This is typical. Unrighteous Israel, that has in vain sought righteousness by law, obtains righteousness by touching in faith the robe of righteousness woven by Christ, the Righteous One. The woman confesses her cure, and is accepted for her faith.

Jesus then moves onward to the house of Jairus. But He allows neither the healed woman, nor any of the spectators to enter the house. He takes as His companions into the scene of resurrection only three even of the apostles - "Peter, James, and John." He next tests the faith of those within the house. This, which they are lamenting as death, is, in the presence of the Lord, only sleep. They laugh Him to scorn. And He puts them all out of the house. He enters then into the chamber of the dead, and at His word and touch, she arises. The woman is unclean for twelve years. The girl raised from the dead is twelve years of age. The Church began to enter on life, when Israel was wholly rejected as unclean. She is restored to life, when the remnant of Israel finds Christ to be the Lord our righteousness.

In this instance both the taken and the left are believers ; the three taken are the honoured disciples. The nine left outside are dishonoured. And the Saviour requires this first of the resurrections to be kept a secret.

2. THE SECOND COMPANIONSHIP : Matt. 16., 17.

Israel has blasphemed the Holy Ghost ; and the Lord puts on the veil of parable. They will not repent, despite His awful words. He then draws out of the mouth of the twelve the evidence of His nation's unbelief in Himself. He demands what is the disciples' view of Him, and Peter proclaims Him the Christ, the Son of the living God. The Saviour owns this confession as the result of living faith, bestowed on the beloved of the Father ; and declares that to be the creed of the Church which He is about to build. "The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it," for the Lord Jesus will open the gates for the dead in Christ; and then shall begin "the kingdom of heaven", or the day of the millennial reign. Those who wish to have part in that must deny themselves, and follow in His steps. For He is coming again, and that day will be the day of justice, in which he will render to each according to his conduct ! In order that it may be seen that these are not empty words, He would give to some of those listening to Him a picture of that coming kingdom of glory, of which He was so continually peaking.

Accordingly, on the seventh day after, He chooses Peter, James, and John, as His companions, and takes them up* into an high mountain apart - by night. Here is then a type of the rapture.

But it is not a taking of all the disciples. Not all even of the apostles are taken, nor the major part of them. The three favoured ones behold Jesus in His glory, and two others in glorified bodies also ; one, representing the dead raised (Moses) ; the other, those who shall be caught up without death to His presence (Elijah).

[* . . . used by all three Gospels. Also Matt. 17: 1.]

What became of the nine apostles? They were left at the foot of the Mount till the next day. They are powerless against a demoniac brought to them. Cavillers are there taunting them with their want of power, when Jesus descends. He comes with a word of strong rebuke in His mouth. "O faithless and perverse generation! How long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?" Thus the nine apostles are addressed, as among the rest. At all events, our Lord does not discriminate them.

Here again, both the taken and the left are believers. The taken are the honoured ; the left, the dishonoured ones. The left are found below in circumstances which typify the time of unbelief and of trouble.

3. THE THIRD COMPANIONSHIP, OR GETHSEMANE.

After the last Supper Jesus assures the apostles that Satan had obtained permission to sift them, and that the whole of them would that night stumble at His arrest. Peter and the others refuse to accept the warning. Peter especially is possessed with the spirit of the Old Covenant. "All that the Lord hath said, we will do." He is not, then, one of the poor in spirit, for whom the kingdom of glory is prepared. He has to learn his need of strength divine to be able to stand in the day of trial. Such is the temper of some Christians now, who think themselves competent to face the coming storm of unbelief.

The Saviour enters the garden, and bids the disciples to watch and pray, that they might be kept out of temptation. He then takes as His companions the same favoured three, Peter, James, and John, tells them of the awful weight and anguish which are oppressing His soul, and bids them to stay there apart from the remaining eight, and watch with Him.

He goes alone, and earnestly beseeches, that, His Father would remove the bitter cup.

He comes back to the disciples, and finds them asleep. He wakes them, and addresses a word of rebuke, especially to Peter - 'So you could not watch a single hour with me!' "Watch, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

He departs again and prays the same prayer. Returning the second time, He finds them asleep once more. "And He left them and departed."

There is a brief interval, during which He prays the third time. Returning again, and finding them once more asleep, He assures them that there was now no escape. The hurricane was upon them! While He yet was speaking, Judas and his band came. Peter for a moment resists with the

sword, and is rebuked. "Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled." Peter, venturing in to the assembly of the Saviour's foes, is drawn into denying his Master with oaths and curses!

Can any, in view of "the days of Noah", mistake the bearing and lesson of this incident? Here Jesus by facts the most striking confirms His solemn warnings to believers : Mark 13: 33-37.

"Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man, taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in, the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

In these words we see what will be the result to the unwatchful disciple. He who is seen on the former occasions as light scattering the darkness, and as Life undoing death, is in the garden left to endure (while innocent) the burthen of sin. There Light is wrapt in darkness, and Life is pressed almost to the gates of death.

The hour of the Saviour's foes, and of Satan's power darkness will once again be upon the sleepers, ere they are aware, and in the storm the left ones will fall, as did Peter and the others. The three privileged to be in the former two scenes of power and glory, were then left to the day of trial. It is not with impunity, that any disciple, however favoured, can disregard any command of the Master. Something more than the simple faith which avails for salvation is required to escape this tempest. And the watchfulness which our Lord calls for is not possessed by the great majority of believers ; while some leaders in His Church are defeating by their teaching this special injunction of our Lord.

Let us now examine some of the testimony of the **BOOK OF REVELATION** to the same truth.

In the phrase, then, 'the Rapture of the Church' two fallacies lie couched.

(1) It is assumed that there is to be a rapture of the Church, as the Church. It is not so. The rapture of reward takes effect on the watchful of the Church; the unwatchful being left to the Day of Trouble.

(2) The second assumption is, that only one rapture is to take place. Now the Book of Revelation will show seven raptures or at all events, there are seven distinct notices of rapture though it may be, that two or more notices may refer to the same rapture.

'In the Apocalypse the Church is not seen after chapter 3.'

True! But it does not therefore follow that all the Church are rapt at once, in grace. Nor does it follow that the twenty four elders are the Church.

After chapter 3, the Church has lost its standing as God's witness on earth. For the Church bears witness to the day of God's mercy: 2 Cor. 5: 1:8 ; 6: 12. Its standing is lost, as soon as the day of judgment begins. And this is the force of 2 Thess. 2. The testimony had gone forth at Thessalonica, that the day of judgment had set in. Paul denies it, and denounces the falsehood. Else we ought not to be rejoicing in God, but to be hiding and howling: Isa. 2; 13: 6; Jer. 4: 6-10. The Apostle could not deny that to be in the terrible day of wrath was woe ; but he is able to comfort us with the assurance that till the watchful of the Church are carried above, the day with its sins and its punishments cannot come. With Rev. 4. the throne of judgment is set, and the day of grace and of the Church is past.

When the ready ones of the churches are stolen away from on earth, the great body of believers, lukewarm and careless, will be left; and while the kernel has been scooped out, the shell looks much as it was. So, after Christ had reduced the temple of the Lord to be only Israel's house, it yet looked to all outward appearance the same as before.

The Apocalypse gives us the government of God in relation to heaven, Hades, and earth. It views everything in the light of the coming day of the Lord. The Saviour in the first vision is not presented as the Lord of grace, but as the Risen High Priest of the heavenly places ; with eyes of fire, feet of brass (Mic. 4: 13), and sword of double edge.

REVELATION CHAPTERS 2 & 3

The book of Revelation is divided by our Lord into three 3 parts : 1: 19. The first consists of the vision of Christ, the stars, and the lamps. Then come "the things that are", or the churches in their varied states, during the time that God is pleased to recognize them. Then comes the prophetic portion, "the things which are about to be after these things". (Greek.)

The seven churches are all assemblies of believers. No others are God's assembly. No others are lights on high. It is not 'the Church of Thyatira', or 'of Ephesus', but 'the Church in Ephesus', 'the Church in Thyatira'. It is, therefore, manifestly to err, to suppose any of these churches to signify 'Protestantism', or 'Popery'.

State establishments are Babylon, or 'confusion'. The angel is the apostle or chief pastor. He is not the representative of the Church. He is an individual distinct from the rest of the body, ruling them. The separate symbols of the stars and lamps prove this at once to the candid.

The Church, in view of the coming day, is not one. Paul discovers it to us as one ; for he is the witness of its standing in the day of grace. But in view of Christ's demands on believers the answer to privileges given, the Church is divided into seven contemporaneous portions. And the spiritual response, to Christ's claims given by each Church is different from that given by any other Church. Responsibility is not one, but diverse and local. Ephesus is not responsible for Sardis, Sardis for Laodicea.

Let us now look at the four last of the seven churches. For in these the readiness or unreadiness for Christ's appearing comes into view.

THYATIRA

This Church, like all the others, is divided into overcoming believers and believers overcome. The promises are made to the conquerors, and the things promised are exclusive of all those who do not fulfil the conditions supposed in them. The promises belong to the Government of God as "the Righteous Judge".

In this Church, amidst much that the Saviour could approve, the wife of the apostle (or chief pastor) was a grievous offender.* She was not only evil herself, but by false doctrine and alluring arts she led Christ's servants (believers only are Christ's servants) back into heathenism and its corruption. Now, while the Spirit promises to those 'who turn from idols to serve the living God, and to wait for His Son from heaven' that they shall escape the wrath coming on the living world, this of course does not include those believers who, as in this case, turned from Christ to idols :1 Thess. 1: 9. If any are of the world's works and on the world's level in that day, when God in government is not regarding faces, they will be treated as the world ; and left amidst the judgments which are to overtake it, after the watchful of the churches have been caught away: 1 Thess. 5.

[* That this is the true reading is clear. (1) What power had the angel (or the church, if you will) over a "woman" merely? (2) The documentary evidence for the reading is good. (3) The probability arising from the latter doctrines current in patristic times, was that the obnoxious 'thy' would be removed. (4) It is the more difficult reading.]

Accordingly our Lord threatens judgment on her, her paramours, and her children. He alludes to Jehu's vengeance on Jezebel and her sons. To this refer his eyes on fire with indignation. And, as Jehu trod Jezebel underfoot after she was cast down, so the Saviour significantly speaks of his feet of brass.

"I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation". Here then some of Christ's servants of the Church will be cast into great tribulation sent in displeasure. Much more then, may some of Christ's people in the Church, less grossly offending, be left in great tribulation, if they be found after such warning impenitent, as Jezebel was.*

[* This comes to its height in Babylon, as seen in Rev. 17. 18. In 18. we have her casting down. In verses 7-10 the Trouble and the 'Death' (or 'pestilence').]

'Ah, but no time is specified, as that in which the Great Tribulation here threatened shall take place.'

Therefore it leaves all times that suit the Lord open. The woe must be fulfilled some day it may be fulfilled any day. And there is no time so suited as that when the throne of judgment (chap. 4.) is set, and the day of patience is over. Here then our proposition is proved. Some of the

Church will be offenders in like sort in the latter day, and retribution will be dealt out to them as here foretold; that is, they will have to pass through the Great Tribulation, which is the consequence the erection of God's throne of judgment.

How clearly this is the result of the great principle announced by our Lord's own lips in v. 23. "All the churches shall know that I am the searcher of reins and hearts, and I WILL GIVE TO EACH OF YOU ACCORDING TO YOUR WORKS." As the conduct of each believer of the Church deserves, Christ will measure to him. If so, then, believers who have fallen to the world's level will be treated as of the world.

The Saviour goes on to notice that not all the Church in Thyatira had thus fallen. Hence he discriminates, "To you I say, the rest in Thyatira." "I will put upon you no other burden; but What ye have already, hold fast till I open." *

[*See the Greek word. . . (1) It is well supported, and is (2) the more difficult reading.]

That is, while some would find the ark door shut, to others it would be open, and their escape of the day of trouble secure.

The reference, "till I open", is probably to the scene of Jehu's anointing. He is God's avenger. To him is sent a messenger prophet with a box of oil, which he was to pour on his head. "Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel" "Then open the door, and flee, and tarry not:" 2 Kings 9: 3, 10. So, when Christ opens the door, His obedient ones will escape, while his Avenger takes His terrible course.

Jesus is seen fulfilling this word, as soon as the churches are dismantled, and the throne of judgment is set : 4: 1, 2. "After these things, I saw, and behold, a door was opened in heaven, and (there was) the first voice which I heard as it were of a trumpet talking with me [Christ, 1: 10.]) saying, Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must take place after these things." "Immediately I became in the spirit. and behold a throne was being set in the heaven, and upon the throne a sitter." This throne is like Mount Sinai. Out of it proceed lightning, thunders, voices; and from it go forth messengers of death and judgment.

To reign with Christ in his millennial day is a promise to the obedient and victorious ones of the churches. "He that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations."

SARDIS

Jesus as Son of God addresses with solemn words this leader of the Church in Sardis. Great was his reputation, but his liveliness of faith was gone. Life was still there, and he was to become watchful, and strengthen whatever of good in himself or in the Church was left : for his duties before God had been left unfulfilled. He was to repent of his coldness ; and to hold fast what he retained of former truth and practice. But, "If therefore thou shall not watch, I will arrive over thee as a thief, and thou shalt not recognize what hour I arrive, over thee." The angel then of

Sardis, and the main body of the Church there would be left in the day of Great Trouble. For Christ will have descended secretly from His Father's throne into the air. He has arrived over the earth as the Thief. He has put forth His hand, and has taken away from earth His watchful ones. But the spiritual sleepers are not aware of his arrival. Had they been caught up to his Presence, they would have known it in the best way. But here the warning of our Lord, and the history of Gethsemane lend us full light. "Lest coming, suddenly, He find you sleeping." And so in the eventful night of the Lord's betrayal He came to the disciples, found them asleep, and left them. Thus will it be with believers of the Church who are spiritually asleep. They will be caught in the Day of Trouble as were the eleven apostles. How many disciples (not "mere professors") are in darkness, so that "the day will overtake them as a thief !"

So Moses and Joshua arrived over the camp quite unexpectedly, and saw the feast, the idol, and the dancing ; and judgment encircled both Aaron and the seventy elders who had left their lofty place against orders (Ex. 24: 14), as well as the multitude in general (Ex. 32: 17-29). Were apostles in the trouble that began in Gethsemane? Much more shall sleeping private saints be found in the Trouble to come.

But this Church also has a remnant. "Thou hast a few names in Sardis, which have not defiled their raiment. And they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy. He that thus overcometh (Greek) shall be clothed in white raiment." Some of the Church of Sardis then are on high, caught up among the Great Multitude of chapter 7. But of this bye and bye.

PHILADELPHIA

Here is a chief pastor and a Church without rebuke. Jesus presents himself to them as possessed of all the treasures of David, for He holds the key of them. It is His to open and none can shut; to shut, and none can open. It is He who opens the door into heaven, at which John enters, while the throne of judgment is being placed on high. If any then be taken up by Christ, Satan cannot hinder. And if Christ leave any, he cannot enter.

"Because thou hast kept the word of my Patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of the temptation that is about to come on the whole habitable earth, to try the dwellers upon the earth." Behold then a special reward annexed our Lord to a special excellence. The angel had kept 'the word of Christ's patience'. This may be taken either as signifying 'the doctrine of Christ's awaiting his kingdom', or the doctrine of the Christian's patiently waiting for Christ's coming and kingdom'. Either way, the sense is nearly the same. Now, are all Christians keeping this word of Christ's patience? Do all teach or own Christ's kingship as "Son of David?" The large majority of believers (not "mere professors") do not accept this truth. How then can anyone, instructed in the Scripture, assume so quietly : "Therefore the Church will not be in the Great Tribulation?" It is a special Promise to some believers. Some Christians openly profess themselves "citizens of earth", instead of being "pilgrims and strangers". As then the promise embraces the latter, the former are excluded. The hour of temptation will seize upon those who are morally and spiritually "dwellers upon the earth". The escaping by rapture that Day of

Trouble then is not a matter of grace, but the result of being "accounted worthy to escape :"
Luke 21: 36 ; 2 Thess. 1: 5, 11. It is fulfilled by being rapt to heaven.

LAODICEA

Laodicea occupies the lowest point at which Christ can recognize a church. It is characterized by high thoughts of itself, and low thoughts and affections toward Christ.

It is the lukewarm water, which is about to be cast out of Christ's mouth. It is the tasteless salt, which is to be cast out of the house, and to be trodden underfoot by men. Thus from the beginning of His ministry our Lord foretold the falling away of some of the disciples from their love and obedience to Him, and to His words, and their consequent loss of standing before God and man: Matt. 5: 13. Behold, then, the ground on which He will discriminate in the day to come. He will not act in the same way towards a Philadelphian, and towards a Laodicean believer. Their difference of lot will make known to themselves and others what Christ thinks of them. When the Philadelphian is caught on high, the Laodicean is spued out below. Some Laodiceans will be left on earth even till the last vial. The shame of their nakedness will appear. Compare 3: 18, with 16: 15.

No better portion of the Church, no remnant appears here. It is only, 'If any one hear My voice'. Nevertheless the Lord ceases not to love them, and therefore rebukes, (19) and will chasten them, by leaving them to the fierce persecution of the coming day.

THE THRONE AND ELDERS. CHAPTERS 4 & 5

As soon as sentence is passed on Laodicea and its angel, the scene changes. A new throne is set in the heaven, and to it John is caught up: 4: 1, 2. Here is the first rapture. It is apparently destined for those who occupy the moral place of the apostle, as partakers in the tribulation and kingdom, and patient waiting for Christ: 1: 9. The first rapture, then, takes place just after the day of grace is over. It is a blessing, to be meted out to the watchful ones by the new throne of judgment. It is a thing to be attained by watchfulness, and prayer to escape: Luke 21: 36. It is certain, then, that as great majority of Christians have not this attitude, they will fail of the blessing attached to it. That day will come upon them as a snare, for they are in spirit dwellers on earth, and occupied with its cares: Luke 21: 34, 35.

The throne of God here is the throne of government, and therefore of justice, which awards to each his place according to works. The kingdom is given to Christ as the worthy One, and to His disciples, if accounted worthy: Rev. 5: 9; Luke 20: 35 ; 2 Thess. 1: 5, 11 ; Rev. 3: 4 ; 1 Thess. 2: 12.

The resurrection and entry of any one into the kingdom of the Christ is not granted to any as a 'believer' simply, but as 'righteous', or a 'saint' Matt. 10: 41. The resurrection is the resurrection of the just -, or "of the righteous": Luke 14: 14. The kingdom is that of 'the saints' : Dan. 7 Cor. 6: 2-11 ; Matt. 5: 6, 20; 6: 33; 13: 43, 49 ; 25: 37, 46; 1 Pet. 4: 18 ; Heb. 12: 14. The day is that of "the manifestation of God's righteous judgment " : Rom. 2.

Now that cannot be shown except God deal with elect and non-elect alike, according to their works. The principle affects first Christ Himself (Heb. 1: 8, 9; Phil. 2.), then His members, and then both Israel and the Gentiles.

The elders and living creatures first celebrate the worthiness of God as Creator, and then the worthiness of Christ.

Who are these elders? Some say, 'The Church.' What is the evidence for it? The interpolated 'us' in v. 9. critics are now satisfied that we should read: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof : for thou slain, and redeemedst [us] to God by thy blood (some) out every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to our God kings and priests, and they shall reign over the earth." Now, if that be the true reading, the 'us' must be rejected, not only as unnecessary and as having the air of a gloss; but as making one party to be redeemed by blood, and another party to reap the fruits of it in their kingly and priestly dignity.

No other evidence is adduced in proof that the elders are the Church. But there is plenty of evidence against it. Their number 'twenty-four'. The Church's numbers are 'one', and 'seven'. How do you make out the twenty-four? (2) They praise God for creation : is that the Church's calling? 4: 11. (3) They appear enthroned and crowned, before Christ is seen as the Lamb. (4) They never give Christ the glory of their salvation and their exalted station. (5) They speak of those redeemed by the blood of Christ as about to supplant them as God's kings, and priests. Will the Church ever be so superseded? (6) They never appear when the accepted ones of the Church reign with Christ: 20: 4-6. (7) They do not make their appearance in the eternal state.

Who are they then? The chiefs of the angels. And they exhibit the beauty of our Lord's words: "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." They confess their own unworthiness to reign in the presence of the slain Lamb. They retire without a murmur, and leave their dignities to Him and them. The settling of this point is of much moment ; for if you place the Church where it is not, you have to deny evidence of its existence, and to displace it, where it does really appear.

THE GREAT MULTITUDE 7: 9-17

Here are the results of the Second Rapture. Peter at Pentecost cites the signs which are to precede the great and terrible day of the Lord: Acts 2: 19-21. Until they have come, it is the time of the proclamation of forgiveness of sins, and present salvation may go on. But in the sixth seal we have the "wonders in heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath". "The sun is turned into darkness, and the moon into blood", as Peter speaks.

The elect out of Israel's tribes are first shown us : Rev. 7: 1-8. They are on earth, and are sealed on the forehead, that they may escape the woes coming on the earth.

Then we have the Great Multitude gathered out of all the nations. Who are they? Accepted ones of the Church of Christ are among them. Where are they? Mr. Darby strangely says, 'they

are on earth'. He gives no proof. Only his theory requires that they should not be the Church, for the twenty-four elders are in heaven already, he says, as representatives of the Church.

It is, however, perfectly clear that the Great Multitude is in heaven.

1. Else they could not be "in front of the throne and of the Lamb." Wherever this phrase is used, the things or persons so described are in heaven. (1) Grace and peace . . . "from the seven Spirits which are before the throne" : 1: 4; 4: 5. Is not the Holy Spirit hereby shown to be in heaven? (2) "Before the throne is a sea of glass" : 4: 6. That is a part of the temple of heaven. (3) The elders worship "before the throne" : ver. 10. Are not they in heaven? Mr. D. supposes they are. They are 'the rapt Church then found in heaven.' If so, then, this multitude also are in heaven.

The temple is in heaven. The throne is the centre of the temple. They stand in front of the throne. Was Israel still in Egypt when they stood before the Presence of the Lord at Sinai? Neither then is this Great Multitude which stands in front of the throne.

2. This Great Multitude are the priests risen from the dead. For they serve "God day and night in His temple" : ver. 15. Now the flesh could not sustain such continuous service.

3. Moreover, the temple in which they minister is in heaven.

"A door is opened in heaven": 4: 1. John ascends, and is within the temple, and beholds in its centre the throne. See also 11: 19 ; 14: 17 ; 15: 5 ; 16: 17.

'But I saw no temple' says John.

No, not in the final state and place, the City of God. But till the millennium is past, the temple abides. Till then, the Great Multitude is keeping "the feast of tabernacles" on high; God himself spreading tent over them: ver. 15. They are "the tabernaclers in heaven", and therefore they are rejoicing because they are out of the reach of Satan, who in that day is cast into earth : 12: 9. It is because of this deliverance from his power that Satan's king blasphemes them, for he cannot in any other way assail them. "He opened his mouth for blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle - those who are tabernacling in the heaven": 13: 6. (True reading.)

4. Some, if not all of them, are of the Church. They know the Father and the Son, before whom they stand. This is characteristic of the Church: 1 John.

They celebrate the praises of the Father and the Son, ascribing to them their salvation. Salvation and the kingdom are now come to heaven.

5. As possessed of white robes, they are justified. The Church is washed, as they are, from sins, in the blood of the Lamb. White robes, to be procured by Christ, were needed by Laodicea. The remnant in the Church of Sardis should walk with Christ in white, as worthy.

These then whom Christ robes in white, and leads, are of the Church: ver. 17; 3: 4, 5. The knowledge of the blood of the Lamb is characteristic of the Church.

6. The expression, "the blood of the Lamb", is only found in this book in connection with the Church 1: 5 ; 5: 9 ; 7: 14 ; 12: 11 ; 22: 14. *

[* I adopt the preferable reading: "Blessed are they that wash their robes."]

But these have all come out of 'the Great Tribulation'. And the Great Multitude (some may say) are saints risen and in heaven before the last seal is broken. Now the Great ,Tribulation does not begin till the first of the woe-trumpets - the fifth: 8: 13. How can these have come out of Great Tribulation?'

There are two Great Tribulations. For Abraham has seeds : (1) the seed as the sand of earth, and (2) the as the stars of the heaven : Gen. 22: 17. And God owns the two seeds as His two people. Their history, founded on God's principles of grace and government, is similar respect of both, and is presented to us in the covenant of faith made with Abraham and ratified to Christ: Gen. 15: 5, 6, 18 ; Gal. 3: 17. "Know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs and shall serve there, and they shall afflict them." These words may apply Abraham's heavenly seed, fixed in glory like the stars. While away from their land they are troubled by the seed of the serpent. The time of the Church is throughout one of persecution, and trouble: John 16: 33 ; Acts 14: 22 ; Col. 1: 24; 2 Tim. 3: 12. This, its characteristic, appears in the Lord's epistles. None of the Churches are exempt from trouble, but those who have left their standing and are under rebuke by Christ. Two persons are named in the seven epistles as martyrs. All the occurrences of the word "tribulation" in Revelation refer to the Church: 1: 9 ; 2: 9, 10, 22.

The trouble of Abraham's fleshly seed was to last but four hundred years. The trouble of the heavenly seed has lasted near two thousand, and with far greater severity than that endured by Israel in Egypt. But when the sixth seal has been opened, the time of mystery has ceased for the Great Multitude.

The history of their deliverance is like that of Israel. The interview between John and our Lord in the first chapter, when He is seen walking amid the golden candlesticks, is like that between Moses and Jehovah at the bush. John, like Moses is sent with a message to the elders: Ex. 4: 30. But the issue is not like that of Moses's and Aaron's embassy: 31. The Church of Christ occupies in grace the standing which was offered to Israel, as the result of their own obedience. To Israel it was promised that, if obedient, they should be priests, and kings. Of us it is written, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us kings and priests to God and His Father": 1: 5, 6.

The Church has already in baptism passed through the Red Sea. The Lord in the fourth and fifth chapters of Revelation is remembering His covenant with Abraham: Ex. 2: 23-25. And from the throne proceed the active measures whereby the world is judged, and His people are rescued. The sixth seal, whereby earth and heaven are shaken, answers to God's call to Pharaoh, to let His people go. One of His two peoples is thereon delivered by power. Their time of trouble is over. The other people has yet to undergo theirs : for their sins are not forgiven. "It is a terrible

thing that I will do with thee", is the chief sentiment of God's 'covenant of marvels' made with Moses: Ex. 34: 10.

The throne of Rev. 4., in relation to the Great Multitude, is Sinai, or the Mount of God. It is also the tabernacle completed, and opened by the Moses of the better covenant. He is designated as "the Lamb". For it is His blood, the blood of the true Passover, which has brought them near. This Lamb of God once slain and bearing the marks thereof is the deliverer out of Egypt ; for He is risen, and in resurrection is become the new Moses and Aaron, the leader and high priest of the better people.

Rev. 7: 9, gives "the third day" in the morning : (Ex. 19: 16), for with the Lord a thousand years is as one day and the Great Multitude are sanctified by the better Moses. They have washed their robes, not in water, but in the blood of the Lamb. Thus the commands of the Passover in Egypt, and of the Lord at Sinai, are united. In Egypt the blood was put on the doors; at Sinai the robes were washed in water. Jehovah then descended from heaven to earth. But the heavenly people go up to their God in heaven. The Mount of God under the better covenant is still resonant with voices, thunders, lightnings ; and the sixth seal recalls the day of Israel's unwilling approach to the fiery Mount. Then notice was given that none should touch the Mount, and the priests were commanded to sanctify themselves, lest the Lord should burst on them in fire : Ex. 19: 22, 24. But the Great Multitude are God's rescued ones, "borne on eagle's wings" above the sky, and "brought unto Himself" in a higher sense than of old. They answer to the seventy-two elders who after the sprinkled blood go up to the presence of God: Ex. 24. They are consecrated priests also, of a better order than Aaron's for they draw near to the centre of the true Holiest of heaven without fear. This, their superiority, is due to "the blood the new covenant" in its atoning and consecrating power.

The Great Multitude are also like Israel at Sinai, in that they are in tents, keeping the heavenly feast of Tabernacles. For they are still on their journey. They have not yet reached the new heaven and earth, nor are they arrived at "the fountains of life's waters", which spring out of the throne God in the new city, the Holy Jerusalem : 22. But the perils and troubles of the wilderness encountered by Israel are no more to touch them. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any burning. (Greek, Cf. Num. 11: 1-3.) For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them to life's fountains of waters."

They once felt these troubles while on earth, as Paul testifies 1 Cor. 4: 11 ; 2 Cor. 11. Some were even put to death by burning. These troubles likewise befall those left on the earth through the judgments sent by the Lord.

This Great Assembly was also typed by "the Great Multitude" described by John and the three first Gospels who went up with our Lord to the temple, at His last visit to Jerusalem. The disciples, a very great multitude, escorted Jesus with enthusiasm both to the city and the temple. The source of the interest awakened in Jerusalem at His coming was, that He had lately

raised Lazarus from the dead. But now the whole assembly consists of those raised from the tomb, and Jesus as Resurrection and Life, leads them. The first multitude shouted, 'Save now!' (Hosanna.) But this assembly rejoices over salvation come! Jesus and His attendant people did not take the priest's place in the temple, but abode in the outer court. But now that the temple is the true one on high into which Jesus has entered, He and they are priests there evermore.

That glad throng of yore bore fronds of palm trees, for there was in it some of the joy of Tabernacles, a token of the "rest that remaineth for the people of God", as shown in the resurrection of the saint, Lazarus. But it was primarily the procession attending Christ as the Lamb of the Passover, and its setting apart for sacrifice, on the tenth day, before its offering on the fourteenth. At that entry into the temple they washed not their robes, but strewed them, such as they were, before the Saviour's presence as the King. He had then to hunger, thirst, and weep, that we and they might be freed from these troubles.

Jesus led that multitude to the temple ; but it was garrisoned by Pharisees, elders, and chief priests, who scowled at the intruding crowd and their leader. But now all is changed; the twenty-four elders of heaven lift up their voices in praise of the Lamb, and the angels add their attestations, as did the children of old in the temple.

On that occasion, certain Greeks wished to see Jesus, and the notice of their inquiry was borne to our Lord. He thereupon utters His comparison of Himself to a grain of wheat which must die and be buried, ere it can multiply itself. Behold, then, in this vast assembly of the redeemed out of every nation, the proofs of the Saviour's foresight, the merits of His blood, the reproductive power of His death and resurrection.

3. The next rapture is that of the two martyred prophets: Rev. 11. Their spirit is that of the law, while their history is like Christ's. For three years and a half they work miracles, overcoming the enmity which arises against them by slaying their foes. At length they are encountered by one who rises from among the dead; and he prevails against them, when the power of mortal men availed not. Joy bursts forth at their death. They are not allowed burial, but their corpses lie in the street of the city that slew their Lord and ours. For three days and a half they thus lie, till corruption has set in on their ghastly, pale, bruised, discoloured bodies. Then the spirit of life from God enters them, and they stand up, to the amazement and dismay of those that rejoice over their death. But ere the breathless pause of surprise which chills their persecutors is past, they are called up to the heaven, and like their Lord ascend thither in the cloud. As an earthquake attended the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, so does it wait on their arising. But the latter earthquake, unlike that at the Saviour's coming forth of the tomb, is the swift messenger of death to millions. Seven thousand of the first-born of the Gentiles, and of the city spiritually called Egypt, 'men of name' out of all lands gathered there are cut off ; and great is the woe and the consternation.

If their resurrection be like that of our Lord in another point of view, "many bodies of saints" will arise with them, and probably ascend with them too.

THE MAN-CHILD REV. 12.

We come next to the vision which extends from chapter 12. to 14. inclusive. It opens with a "great sign in the heaven". We have before us the carrying out of the scene in Eden - the Woman and the Serpent. The time when the Woman's Seed will bruise the Serpent's head, is come.

The apostle sees a Woman "clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars".

Who is this Woman ?

Not the Church. That was set aside before the prophetic part of the book began. The Church is a chaste virgin : 2 Cor. 11: 2, 3. This is a wife with several sons.

(1) It is a mystic Woman, a city. There are two others of like quality in this book. (2) Babylon, the city, which in John's day was ruling over kings: 17. (3) The heavenly Jerusalem: 21: 9.

This Woman is Jerusalem, a point which can be proved by many considerations. She is the centre of God's previous three great dispensations, and has been glorified by God in them all. These three dispensations appear in the three classes of heavenly glory which cluster round her.

1. She is "clothed with the sun". For Christ is her righteousness. And Jerusalem under the Gospel was glorified by the Holy Ghost's coming down to testify of Christ and His salvation. The evil aspect of Jerusalem was shown us in the previous chapter as being the place of Satan's synagogue, of slaying the Lord's prophets and crucifying the Lord of Glory Himself : 11: 8. But this chapter shows us Jerusalem as the holy city, the place of disciples.

This is not the first Woman vainly clothing herself with fig leaves. But she, as Eve was afterwards, is clothed by the Lord; only her clothing is much superior to the coat of skin there given.

2. "The moon is under her feet." By the moon is signified the Law. For as the moon derives all its light from the sun, so the Law borrowed its brightness from a coming Christ : 2 Cor. 3: 7-10. In our Lord's day Israel stood upon the Law as their righteousness, and refused to receive Christ as "Jehovah our righteousness". But now, Jerusalem has the moon under her feet. Under the Law, Jerusalem was glorified as the centre of government and worship ; the place of the palace and the temple.

3. "On her head a crown of twelve stars." This refers to the patriarchal dispensation, characterised by the twelve sons of Abraham and Jacob. Under that dispensation God glorified Jerusalem as the abode of Melchizedec, the priest and king, who blessed Abraham.

She is in the pangs of pregnancy. She has conceived great hopes from the promises of God in His word. But the time of crisis is come. "In sorrow," according to the sentence of the Garden, she is

"to bring forth children". Her faith draws out the enmity of the men of unbelief in the city. Moreover, the enmity of the world is now at its height. The Holy City is being trodden down by the Gentiles : 11: 1, 2. Here then are the sources of her pain. And this attitude is given to Jerusalem by her own prophets: Is. 13: 1-13 shows it. Still more clearly is it discovered to us in Is. 24.-26. Chapter twenty-four gives us the great and terrible day of the Lord, when earth's trial is come : 17-19. Satan and his hosts are punished: 21, 22. Then Christ and his twelve elders ("ancients"), or apostles, shall reign : 23. In the twenty-fifth chapter we have Christ come. He shall spread the feast in Jerusalem: 6. The blindness cast by Satan over all the nations' eyes shall then be removed: 7. Then is come the resurrection of saints and the consolation of God: 1 Cor. 15: 54. Jesus has appeared in person to those waiting for him ver. 8, 9. The twenty-sixth chapter gives us the song of joy in Judah. Other lords than the Most High have ruled over Israel. But they shall not rise at the resurrection of the just: ver. 13, 14. The nation of Israel is now increased by God: 15. But there is the day of trouble, which must precede. "Lord, in trouble have they visited thee ; they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them. Like as a woman with child that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs, so have we been in thy sight, O Lord." Then comes resurrection. "Thy dead men shall live ; my dead body shall they arise.* Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust" : ver. 19. Next comes a notice of the other, or earthly escape, by the flight from Jerusalem, which our Lord commands. "Come my people, enter thou, into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee. Hide thyself as it were for a little moment until the indignation be overpast. For behold the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity ; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." The little moment of her hiding is the forty-two months of her residence in the desert, which is the time also of the Great Tribulation.

[* In the Septuagint, "They that are in the tombs shall arise." Much better. So John 5: 28.]

See moreover Micah 4: 6, to 5: 3.

Another great sign appears. Satan is presented to us as possessed of power, both on earth and in heaven. He is the great Dragon ; for he is the Prince of the world, the chief of rebel angels. He is the "red" dragon; for he is the murderer from the beginning. It is through him that the martyrs were slain.

And this tells us that God is about to make inquisition for blood, as He promised in his covenant with Noah: Gen. 11: 5.

Satan is the liar who deceives all the nations of the earth. His are the seven heads of Anti-Christ. The last of the Emperors of Rome who is to be in antagonism to Christ will then have come, and he is crowned. This had not taken place in John's day: 17: 9-11. Nor has it yet. Nor can it take place till the Church is cast off as no longer God's witness on earth.

"His tail draws the third of the stars of heaven," for he is the ruler of the fallen angels. With these he fights against the Man-child ; as with his kings of earth he troubles the Woman.

Satan stands before the Woman; for he is aware of the crisis. He sees in the Child to be born the one who will plant him in his rule over the earth, and the conqueror who is coming into the heavens to dwell there. He attempts therefore, to prevent by force the Child's ascent on high. The kingdom of God's glory is at the doors ; that is, the overthrow of the kingdom of Satan. He is therefore all on the alert to destroy if he may.

Who is this Child?

1. Some say it is Christ. Now there are so many points in favour of this, that it is well to look at them. Jesus has, indeed, in the counsels of God, traversed the road to be passed over by this Child.

At the Last Supper there was a pre-figuration of the Woman, and her attitude. The twelve stars were represented by the twelve apostles, to whom were promised thrones over each of the twelve tribes of Israel. They were gathered in Jerusalem trusting in Christ, who was for them the Sun of Righteousness. For his sake they put aside the Passover of the Law for the Supper of the Lord. The moon was under their feet.

They and their Great Master were in pain and sorrow like that of a parturient woman: John 16. Great were their hopes, conceived from the prophets, and the Saviour's words. But it was the hour of the wicked, and the power of Satan, the Prince of Darkness. That was the night of the Saviour's sore agony. The Chief Priests, Herod, Pilate, were against him. The horn (or subordinate potentate) of the Caesar (the head) was to condemn Him to death. But Jesus would be born out of the tomb, and ascend to the Father's presence, as King of kings. Satan and his emissaries attempted to keep Him in the sepulchre, but prevailed not. He ascended as the Conqueror, possessed of all authority in heaven and earth. He went up to God and to His throne.

In his earlier years our Lord exemplified the Flight. He and his mother were compelled to flee from the treacherous king, across the desert into Egypt. He withdrew again into the wilderness to meet the devil, and was, after His hunger, led there by angels.

When His forerunner was slain, Jesus withdrew into the wilderness with the crowd, who believed in Him, and there He fed them miraculously twice, while His own ministry lasted for 1,260 days, or three years and a half.

But the Child here is not Christ. If any would assume the Woman to be the Virgin Mary, and Christ to be the Child, they are refuted by the consideration that both Mother and Child are mystic beings, and not literal persons. Jesus again was his mother's first-born, while this woman has had sons previously. Jesus, moreover, was not born at Jerusalem. His mystic birth (or resurrection) did indeed take place there. But that was in the day of grace, and this takes place in the day of righteousness. Hence, at the Saviour's resurrection, no battle took place on high, nor has Satan been yet ejected :Eph. 6.

The ejection here takes place only three and a half years before Jerusalem is delivered, and the kingdom comes at the seventh trump.

‘But may not the Child be the Church?’ That would be a mystic Child. That is to ascend to heaven, and to reign over the nations.’

This Child is the promised "Seed of the Woman". Its heel has been bruised, for it has suffered unto death. And now is come its turn to bruise the serpent's head. Compare this with the previous chapter. There are the two prophets (,who overcome) witnesses to the Lamb. "My two witnesses." They are sent because of the word of testimony which they are to bear, and they are faithful to it even unto death. One of these two is Enoch, belonging to the patriarchal dispensation, or that of the stars. The other is Elijah, belonging to the Law. Those who wish to see the proof of this will find it in the Apocalypse Expounded by Scripture: Vol, ii. Their resurrection and ascent tell us what are the birth and rapture of the Child. These two prophets are indeed caught up later than the Man Child, for when they are slain the second woe trumpet is past : 11: 13, 14.

Such as the Mother is, such is the Son. The Mother is a unity, glorified in three dispensations of God. So then, I suppose, her Son is a body of conquerors out of these dispensations. But not all Christians are conquerors dispensationally.

And if some of the Church are delivered by the rapture from the days of woe coming on the earth, some are left to go through them. Wherefore, after the heavenly and earthly escape have been shown us, we are made to see that two dispensationally different bodies are concerned in this vision.

1. The Woman's flight speaks of Israel. It pursues the path of old. 2. The rapture tells of the heavenly people, who follow Christ in His resurrection and ascent. Some then of both classes are found on earth, after the two escapes have removed a part of each of the two bodies.

It is not every believer of the Church that is to reign with Christ, but those who suffer with Him, those who obey, and those who are "accounted worthy" 2 Tim. 2: 12 ; Rev. 2; 26, 27 , Luke 20: 35.

It is, however, clear that some or many of the Church belong to this mystic Child. It seems to consist principally of martyrs for the truth and for Christ. "They loved not their lives (souls) unto death." That is not true of every believer. The "testimony" of some believers does not resist the devil, for it is both defective and untrue. The Child wholly consists of conquerors. "They overcame" the devil. But the Seven Churches are by our Lord divided into conquerors, and conquered.

Some of the Church are found in the mystic Child. For some are overcomers, and these are destined to rule the nations with Christ, as the promise to Thyatira shows: 2: 26, 27. Some have

kept the word of Christ's patience, and they shall be preserved, as this Child is, out of the hour of the Great Temptation which is to attack the whole habitable earth: 3: 10.

Their birth is the mystic birth from the tomb. The time of their ascent is somewhere between the sixth seal and the fourth trumpet. For the first woe trumpet brings Satan upon the earth as the "star fallen out of heaven", and he opens the door of the pit to allow his false Christ to come up: Rev. 9: 1,11. As these conquerors are destined to supersede Satan in his power over earth, they are peculiarly the objects of his hatred. Unlike the twenty-four elders, Satan refuses to part with his power. It is only when superior force wrests it from him, that he succumbs. But it is God's counsel, and it must prevail. The devil has bruised their heel in death : they in return, shall, in conjunction with Christ, bruise his head.

In spite of Satan's intelligence and force, these are "caught up to God and His throne". Thus is the man "born into the world", and thereat arises joy : John 16: 21. They are caught up to God and the throne of God. "To God", for they are His approved children. "To the throne of God", for that is the refuge for the oppressed and the righteous : Psa. 9: 7-9, 13, 14. God thus begins to act in judgment. There they are secure from the devil's enmity and his power. And thus we bring this verse into connection with what has preceded. John, by divine command, has measured the temple in heaven, the altar, and the worshippers in the inner court. That is marked out for safety from attack, whether by angels or by men. The outer court on the other hand, which is the temple of Jerusalem below, is exposed to the wrath of Satan and to the nations' power. The Holy City also is unsafe : 11: 1, 2.

Thus this mystic Child is identified with the Great Multitude of chapter 7. Those who would follow this point further will find it drawn out in The Apocalypse Expounded by Scripture, VOL. iii. 39-41. In chapter 7. the saved are seen as the Priests in the temple above. Here they are beheld in relation to the kingdom of God. The elders had anticipated this their two-fold dignity, when Christ took the book: 5: 9, 10.

The Woman flees into the wilderness ; for she is the city of earth, and is under guilt, so that she is unable to resist Satan's onset. Thus she fulfils the types of the law. (1) The woman after her confinement was to be unclean : if she had borne a male, for forty days ; if a female, for eighty days. But Jerusalem's defilement is so far greater that she becomes a 'removed woman' for 1,260 days: Lev. 12. (2) The manslayer was bidden to flee to a city of refuge from the avenger of blood, and on entering that, he would be safe till his cause was tried. Jerusalem in its unbelief slew the Two Witnesses, and the Lord Jesus, and called down the vengeance of that blood on its head. But these disciples of Jerusalem are to be cleansed after their flight. The refuge now, is not in the land of Israel, nor in any city of the habitable earth, for these are the days of vengeance, and only in the uninhabited solitudes of Arabia can she find safety. Satan pursues her, as of old he pursued the children of Israel on their flight out of Egypt. But as Pharaoh and his host were then swallowed up in the deep, so shall the mystic river of the dragon - or the army of pursuit - be by a miracle, and through the opening earth, swallowed up. The Avenger of blood is not allowed to slay. She is not to be slain as the murderess ; but to be forgiven. Still she

has to flee, like David before Absalom, till the days of her purification are past. This flight is foretold in the Jewish prophets : Jer. 4. 6.

The Woman, again we see, is not the Church. The Church has not to flee, but to be caught up out of earth into heaven. The Saviour's prophecy on Olivet gives us a view, both of the rapture of the watchful man of faith, and of the flight of the Jewish disciple in the day of great trouble.

For 1,260 days the fugitives are fed in the desert, as Israel of old was fed forty years. The number 1,260 is compounded of three and a half multiplied by twelve, and the product further multiplied by thirty. Now these three numbers are all implied in the three heavenly glories of sun, moon, and stars, which encircle the woman. Twelve are the stars around her head: thirty is indicated by the moon (the month of 30 days) beneath her feet ; three and a half are the years measured by the sun with which she is clothed. For so many revolutions of the sun she is to be severed from her land.

The time of trouble in its various forms is stated in three ways - as (1) three and a half years (Rev. 12: 14) ; (2) 42 Months (11: 2 ; 13: 5) ; and (3) 1,260 days (11: 3 ; 12: 6).

The observance of "days, months, and years" is characteristic of Judaism (Gal. 4: 10), and is another contribution toward the proof that the woman is Jerusalem.

Again, what is the Woman's "place" in the wilderness? Her place, as under the old covenant, is at Mount Sinai. There was the characteristic attitude of Israel in Exodus (Heb. 12: 18-21), and Galatians. "For these (women) are the two covenants, the one from Mount Sinai, which begetteth into bondage, which is Hagar. For this (word) Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage together with her children" (Gal. 4: 24, 25). And conversely, if the Woman have a place in the wilderness, it is Mount Sinai that is the place ; and that identifies the Woman as the old covenant with her children.

We have in chapter 12., first, the sketch of the Woman and Child; then, in the after-part, a more detailed history, first of the Child, and after it of the Mother.

War in heaven speedily followed the ascent of the Child. It was the natural consequence of it. This is intimated to us, by the phrase, "There followed war in the heaven." By this word is defined the effect of the trumpets and vials (bowls). "The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire." "The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea; and it became blood as of a dead man."

Satan opposes by accusation on high the prayers of the saints while they are below. But when his accusations are, proved false, and the martyr-saints are to be lifted up to their place and power, he attempts to resist their entrance by force. They are not able to cope with force so great. Therefore the angels meet his power, and war ensues. He loses the battle, is cast out of heaven, together with his angels, and is never able to return thither. He is cast into the earth, and has but three and a half years in which to act before the coming of Christ.

Then follows joy in heaven. A voice cries: "Now is come, the salvation and the might, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who used to accuse them before the throne of our God day and night." The voice is angelic; it is not "our accuser is cast down, who used to accuse us day and night." It is in the style of the elders: "Thou hast made them kings and priests unto our God, and they shall reign over the earth." These words give us the reason of the joy. The victory has cast out Satan the accuser of the Child, and Satan's fellows, introducing the Child. This tells us, then, indirectly of what the mystic Child consists. All its constituents are overcomers. Some are victors of the Church. For, who is it that are called to fight spiritually against Satan and his evil spirits in the heavenlies? The Church of Christ: Eph. 6.

As long as the Church is recognized below, so long does God's day of patience with earth extend. With the casting out of Satan from on high, and the entrance on the heavenlies by those who are the lively members of Christ, the standing of the Church ceases.

These conquerors are victorious, not by their own blood, though all or most were martyrs ; but by the blood of the Lamb. They are no time-servers, as Satan alleges they have kept the faith, though death was the consequence 2: 10, 13.

The kingdom of God has come to heaven, and "a man is born into the world." Great is the joy. The angels take the place of Jethro at Sinai, after Israel has been brought to God : and they are glad. This is again mystically the birth of Isaac (laughter). "God hath made me to laugh," says Sarah, "so that all who hear will laugh with me." But, as then Ishmael and Hagar laughed, not in joy, but in mockery, and were therefore cast out : so it is here. The sons of the two covenants shall not inherit together : Gal. 4. The Son has the heritage of heaven, the Mother of the earth.

Christ had long replied to the Accuser on high as the Advocate, plea against plea. But now he shows himself the Lord of Hosts, and His angels cast out the Evil One.

But while there is joy in heaven, there are sorrow and woe on earth. For the fiend has come down with deadly hate and rage against his foes on earth.

Thus come into view two principles announced in a previous vision. John ate the book that had been opened, and that given him by the angel. (1) The eating had two opposite effects ; in his mouth it was sweet, in his belly bitter. (2) He is furnished with a measuring reed, but it is like a rod, for it has two aspects. The temple above is secured from the attacks of Satan : (that is sweet), but the part which is on earth is given up awhile to his rage : (that is bitter). Satan hurls his forces against the temple above, and loses the day. It may not be forced. But woe to the temple and city of God on earth! And John is informed, as soon as he has eaten the book, that he is to 'prophesy again'. Accordingly he does. He goes over the same field from another point, and by another road: chapters 12-14.

Cast down from heaven, Jerusalem the City of God is the place of Satan's vehement hatred and attack. The Woman, instructed by Christ, flees. Satan pursues rapidly with his forces of earth. To

the Woman are given more rapid powers of flight still. And the host which he sends against her is swallowed up in the opened earth, as were Dathan and Abiram's party in the days of Moses.

God interposes, not indeed by visible leaders as in the escape out of Egypt, but He makes good His people's flight into the desert.

Satan scowls, but in vain, with baffled rage, at these who have been rescued from his grasp. But some friends of God and of Christ are still within his reach. "He went away to make war with the remnants of her seed, (1) who keep the commandments of God, and (2) hold the testimony of Jesus."

The heavenly and the earthly escapes do not remove the whole of either class. There are two remnants. (1) The one is Jewish. They keep the commandments of God by Moses. (2) The other is Christian. "They hold the testimony of Jesus." One should have thought this phrase to be clearness itself. But it refutes a theory, and so must defend itself before it proves victorious.

The testimony of Jesus has been sent by God. Do you receive it? You are a Christian. You hold that testimony. You have it both in your hand and your heart. Do you refuse it? You are an unbeliever. Paul was so once. He so refused the witness as to hate the witnesses, and to slay them. He accepted the testimony afterwards, and bore witness to Jesus. He wished to press this truth on others at Jerusalem. But Jesus warned him away. 'They would, not receive Paul's testimony concerning Him:' Acts 22: 18. In consequence they abode in their Judaism and unbelief. This view of the words holds good, whether we understand "the testimony of Jesus", to signify, (1) that which Jesus gave, or (2) that which is given concerning Jesus ; as in the passage last quoted.

'But might not unbelieving Jews be said to have the testimony of Jesus, seeing that they were in possession of the Old Testament prophecies, which testified concerning Messiah's coming ; for witness to Jesus is the very spirit of prophecy?' Rev. 19: 10.

No! The very passage cited in its defence condemns it. The first part of the sentence is omitted, and that says, as the angel's reply to John's worship of him: "See thou do it not ; I am fellow-servant of thee, and of thy brethren which have (hold) the testimony of Jesus. Worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy:" Rev. 19: 10. There is no doubt that John held and suffered for the witness to Jesus (1: 9). He was a Christian, and the angel links with John his fellow-Christians. They, too, held the testimony of Jesus.

The possession of the writings of the prophets or of Moses in the house or the hand is not the having or holding them meant in Scripture. Prophecy is not received unless its meaning, as given of God, is accepted. Paul, as refusing the prophets' testimony to Jesus, was an unbeliever, though he had possession of them, and knew them by heart.

Moreover, in the Millennial Day, these who so practically have and hold the testimony of Jesus as to die for His sake, are distinguished beyond others by reigning with Christ.

"I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus . . . and they lived and reigned with the Christ a thousand years:" 20: 4.

But we have further evidence in the context. The dragon calls up from the bottomless pit his false Christ, and gives him his throne and power: 13.

The False Christ blasphemes the God of Heaven, and the tented camp on high of those who have escaped by rapture. But then he applies himself to war against "the saints" (ver. 7) whether those of Israel, or of the disciples of Christ. Some of these fight against him, but they are warned not to do so. God has given for awhile all power into the enemy's hands. The resisters will find judgment descending on themselves. Patience and prayer is their only allowed attitude : 9, 10. In the next chapter a warning angel proclaims with a loud voice the terrors of the Lord against all who shall worship this Wild Beast. Then follows the word, "Here is the patience of the saints that keep (1) the commandments of God, (2) and the faith of Jesus :" 14: 12. Here the matter is clearer still. We have the same two people of God. The Jewish body comes first, and is described by the Law and its commands as before. But the Christian body is described still more evidently. "They keep the faith of Jesus." In these words there is no loophole of escape by reason of the supposed ambiguity of 'have' and 'testimony'. It is the keepers of the Christian faith. "I have kept the faith", is Paul's account of his course as a Christian: 2 Tim. 4: 7.

Thus then our view of the taking and leaving in Matt. 24. is confirmed. The taken is the Man-Child; the left are the Woman, and the remnants of her seed. The Jewish escape begins from Jerusalem, and takes place by strong physical effort, being consummated when the desert is reached. Those left on earth, and unable to enter the desert are caught in the hurricane of that day of temptation which enwraps the whole of the inhabited lands of earth. The Christian on the other hand is to pray, that he may be "accounted worthy" to escape that time of sin and woe. That is, then, the majority of Christians, as neither watching nor praying so to escape, are left to pass through the Great Trouble of that day. (1) Those who would have part in the earthly escape must beware of hindrances, impeding swiftness of flight. There is, therefore, a remnant of the earthly people who are not able to flee into the wilderness. (2) The heavenly saints are warned against spiritual perils. If asleep in spirit, they will be left to be overtaken by that day, which will entangle in its net all those that have their affections settled in the earth : Mark 13.: Luke 21. Does anyone need further witness? See it in the next verse. "I heard a voice out of the heaven saying, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth'" : 14: 13. Are not the dead in Christ Christians? Yet some of them were left to cope With Anti-Christ in his day, and were by him slain.

THE FIRST-FRUITS : REVELATION CHAPTER 14.

The earth has been described in chapter 13 as it will be when left under the rule of Satan, his False Christ and False Prophet, who require all to mark themselves with the name of the Wild Beast on their forehead or hand. Then God's counter-work is shown to us in chapter 14. A

hundred and forty-four thousand stand with Christ on Mount Zion. Who are they? Mr. Darby says, that they are a Jewish company found at Jerusalem in that day; to be blessed with all temporal blessings on earth in the Millennial Kingdom. Set the Church out of its place, and you must deny its place, and the place of its parts where God has really placed them.

This company is distinctively Christian, and belongs to the Church of Christ. The proofs are clear and numerous. Let us consider the statements of the Apocalypse about them.

1. What is the place of this company ? "The Mount Zion." Is not that on earth? No; not in this book. This prophecy regards the heavenly things as the real things. The seven candlesticks are not those of the temple of earth. The temple, the priests, the city of "the book of this prophecy" are "in heaven". And as they are heavenly, so is the Mount Zion: Heb. 12: 22. The hundred and forty-four thousand of chapter 7. are Jewish. They are sealed with the seal of God by an angel. These are sealed with the Christian name of God. The others are "servants of God". These are companions of the Lamb. They are more honoured than the Great Multitude.

The earthly Holy City and its temple have been given up by God to the nations ; yea, over all the earth Satan's king has power. The nations tread it underfoot all the time that the Wild Beast (or False Christ) is reigning: 11: 2. Then Christ's two martyr-prophets are slain, and die unburied.

This great company then could not be standing in Jerusalem without a battle. But their employment where they are, is the peaceful one of singing a hymn to God. Hence they are in heaven, the place of safety.

They are standing with Christ, as the Lamb, "before the throne". Now, "the Lamb" is not Christ's Jewish name. It presents Him as the slain through weakness, and Israel refuses Him in that character.

2. This company " has the name of the Lamb and the name of His Father written on their foreheads." That name of God is distinctively Christian. Jesus in the Gospel of John is seen continually witnessing of the Father and the Son, and is perpetually refused in that testimony. The Great False Christ is specially to deny the name of the Father and the Son: 1 John 2: 22. These as strikingly assert it, by way of antagonism to the devil and his king. The name of the Father and of the Son belongs especially to the Church, and is the basis of John's Epistles: 1 John 1: 3 ; 2: 24 ; 2 John 9.

3. They sing a peculiar song which none can learn, but themselves. This song is not Jewish; for those of Israel are already written and known.

They sing it in heaven, for John on earth hears the sound come "out of the heaven : " ver. 2. They sing it "in front of the throne, the four living creatures and the elders." They must then be in heaven ; as truly as the seven torches of fire, and the sea of glass : chap. 4. They are the Levites of the new covenant, to whom it is given to play on harps and sing before the Lord in His temple: 1 Chron. 25: 1-7. They answer to the Levites and the priests of Hezekiah's day, who give

praise in the temple and on the way to Berachah, because of their assured victory over the forces of Edom that are coming against them. They sing in faith, the victory is given by God, and His rest follows it: 2 Chron. 20.

4. Their chief characteristic, instead of being Jewish, is in the most entire contrast therewith. They are a company of virgins. Now, that condition was one of disgrace under law. One of the distinctively Jewish promises was, "There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren in thy land:" Ex. 23: 26. "Thou shalt be blessed above all people; there shall not be male or female. barren among you, or among your cattle:" Deut. 7: 14. Jephthah's daughter bewailed her virginity before she was offered up: Judges 11. That the Jewish maidens were not given to marriage, was a curse: Ps. 78: 63. The picture of the blessed fearer of Jehovah was that of one with wife and children around his table: Ps. 238.

But Jesus was not married, nor was John. Our Lord called some to be Christian Nazarites : Matt. 19.

Paul, unmarried likewise, confirms the call: 1 Cor. 7. How strange that any will symbolize the plain words of explanation which the Spirit of God has given to instruct us as to their standing: ver. 4. "Not defiled with women" does not mean 'bad women', or 'sin'.

This company are designedly in contrast with "the dwellers on the earth." The dwellers upon earth rejoice in the slaughter of the two prophets: 11: 10. They also accept the Wild Beast who slays them, and they render him worship: 13: 8. Now the description by our Lord of that day is that men are "marrying and giving in marriage" and they are ready to be swept away by the flood of wrath. But these are the moral contrasts to such a class. In the resurrection there shall be neither marrying nor giving in marriage. These then are of the first-ripe ears. They exhibit in their life on earth that into which all the risen are to arrive. And that being the day of reward, they are presented in resurrection with honour before the throne of heaven, their character now completely established, for the mortal life is past.

Three times the Holy Spirit explains to us the peculiarity of this body, introducing each statement with, 'These are', or 'These'. The first gives us the peculiarity of their standing, from which the other points flow. 'They are virgins'. The explanation describes their reward. They were like Christ in their unmarried life. They then are made His companions in the glory, following the Lamb in His transits between heaven and earth, wheresoever "He may go."

"The Lamb" is not the Saviour's Jewish title.

The third statement concerning this company (ver. 4) refers to their origin. Are they said to be of Israel ? No ; the very contrary. God has two people, and out of each people He has a first-fruits. The hundred and forty-four thousand of chapter 7 are expressly said to be taken out of each of the twelve tribes. But here it is declared that they are "redeemed from the earth", "redeemed from among men". They belong to the Great Multitude which in that seventh chapter follows upon the first-fruits of Israel, and is a Gentile body gathered out of all nations. They are

"redeemed". They are 'the first-born' of the Church - the Lord's other people. And the commands to Israel about the first-fruits and firstborn are our instruction concerning them. The feasts of Israel celebrated on earth have their parallels in the feasts of the heavenly people, celebrated in heaven. The redemption of the first-born is specially spoken of on two occasions. (1) In connection with the Passover. The Lord smote the first-born of Egypt; and peculiarly ransomed, by the blood of the Lamb, the first-born of Israel. In the Revelation the slaughter of the first-born of Egypt has already occurred. "Seven thousand names of men" (or 'men of name') have been cut off at a blow: 11: 13. These others then are the first-born of the new Israel, who now make their appearance, by strength of hand brought out of Egypt. And Egypt is now earth. (2) The first-born appear again in Num. 18. They are God's gift to Aaron as priest. Accordingly, Jesus is presented in connection with them. He is both the Lamb of the true Passover, and He is also the Risen Priest. They stand beside Him risen too, redeemed by Him and to Him.

They are the "first-fruits unto God and the Lamb."

The presentation of a sheaf of first-fruits was a part of the ceremonial of Israel. "When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then shall ye bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest. And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you; on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he-lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt-offering to the Lord:" Lev. 23: 10-12.

These then are now come into the heavenly land, and they are presented in the temple: Ex. 24: 19; 34: 26. The priest who presents them is with them. He is also the Lamb without blemish, who is the burnt-offering accepted for them. This sheaf of the first-fruits then is the token of the harvest at hand.

Again, it was required of the Israelite after his entrance into the land of promise - the inheritance given by the Lord - that he should take of the first-fruits, and put them into a basket and present them at the temple to the priest. He was to say, "I profess this day unto the Lord thy God, that I am come into the country which the Lord sware unto our fathers to give us. And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and shall set it down before the altar of the Lord thy God. And thou shalt speak and say unto the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous. And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us and laid upon us hard bondage; and when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression. And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm:" Deut. 26: 1-10.

Can any mistake the references here? These first-fruits were in Egypt, but in trouble there. They are a part then of the Great Multitude who have come out of the Great Tribulation. Their

affliction is over ; they have entered into the land of their inheritance, redeemed by a hand of power out of earth into heaven. They are presented to the priest in the temple. The throne of God has now taken the place of the altar. For these are priests, and have access to the Holiest. The Israelite on offering his first-fruits was to utter before the Lord a special form of praise. These pour forth a special song.

They are "first-fruits to God and the Lamb". God accepts them, not under the name Jehovah, but under one unknown to and refused by Israel, when the Saviour dwelt with them. The basket of first-fruits belonged to the priest : Deut. 18: 3-5. Answerably hereto, these specially belong to the Lamb.

It would seem then that this does not exhibit another rapture, but that they form a part of the Great Multitude, and of the Man-Child. Caught up to God and His throne, they pour out their song of joy before it.

The redemption here spoken of is not the purchase of all men. It is a purchasing out from earth, as the place ; and from men, as the dwellers on earth. It is then truly redemption; deliverance by price paid.

They are redeemed "as first-fruits". They are ripe ears cut and bought for God and His temple. They are in their Place as accepted first-fruits to God and the Lamb. But the place of first-fruits presented to God is the temple. And the temple is now in heaven. They are risen then; for mortality and corruption cannot enter the place of incorruption. They were redeemed once by Price; now by Power. That power hath transferred them out of earth into the heaven.

The same conclusion follows from their song. Miriam and her fellows did not sing, till they were out of Egypt and past the Red Sea. These then are on the other side of death and Judgment ; conquerors, no more to be tried.

THE HARVEST

"And I saw and behold a white cloud, and one sitting on the cloud like a Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, shouting with a great voice to the Sitter upon the cloud, 'Send thy sickle, and reap; for the hour of reaping is come; for the harvest of the earth is dried up.' And the sitter on the cloud cast his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped."

What is the Harvest? Mr. Darby says it is Jewish, a work Judgment. Who are the parties on whom it is exercised? The good or the bad? If the wicked, wherein does it differ from the Vintage, which is the next in succession?

NO ; it is not Jewish. That is proved by its being the same kind as the First-Fruits which have preceded it. Such as the First-Fruits are, such is the Harvest : according to the principle of Scripture stated in Rom. 11: 16 ; Lev. 23: 10. This is that one of all the raptures which approaches nearest to 1 Thess. 4. or the removal of the watchful ones of the Church. Christ has

come down from heaven to take His disciples to Himself. He is come as the Reaping Son of man, to complete the work which He began as the Sower. It was under this latter title that, after the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, He began a new work, suited to the Day of Mystery, which was then inaugurated. "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man : " Matt. 13: 37. By this title our Lord is also presented to His Churches in this book: 1: 13.

He is come to reap the whole earth; for "the field is the world". The wheat are Jesus' disciples, for "the good seed are the children of the Kingdom". "The harvest is the end of the age," and that season of putting an end to this evil day is arrived. The wheat 'is dried up'. It is dead to earth, and so fitted for the heaven. Is that Jewish? Nay, in contrast thereto, Israel's heritage is the earth. Unlike the first-fruits, the wheat in general is still on the earth. It is now to be garnered. According to the principle of the day of recompense, he who sowed, reaps, and reaps what he sowed. Then, as this is Christ, what he sowed cannot be anything evil. He is an accredited messenger of the temple and the throne. He is crowned, for He is the One who "goeth forth conquering and to conquer". The sickle is a symbolic one, explained in the Lord's parable of the wheat and the tares. "The reapers are angels." "The Son of man shall send His angels." "Then shall the righteous shine out as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Hence the expression used in the original, "Send thy sickle, and reap". So also the matter is stated in a parable peculiar to Mark. "So is the kingdom of God as if a man should cast the seed on the earth, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, how he knoweth not. For the earth of itself brings forth fruit, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit shows itself, immediately he sendeth the sickle because the harvest is come:" Mark 4: 26-29. Christ holds the sickle, because the angels are at His command. But as the "Son of man" He is the Father's servant, and therefore waits His call. At length it is given: 'Reap!' With the utmost ease it is effected. The sickle is cast on the earth by the Sitter on the cloud ; the earth is reaped!

But the wheat of the harvest is manifestly left up to that moment in the time of Trouble. The twelfth chapter gives us those who are rescued before the woe sets in. Then come Satan's time of temptation of earth, and God's time of vengeance. The False Christ and the False Prophet rule the earth : chapter 13. Then the First-Fruits are seen on high, while the Harvest has yet to be cut below. And the next event to the Harvest is the Vintage of wrath, which is another aspect of the Saviour's coming as the Man of War against the armies of earth : chapter 14.

It was commanded, that the corners of the field in the day of harvest were not to be reaped : Lev. 23: 22. Accordingly some are left, as is proved by Rev. 16: 15. At the very last of the bowls of wrath, while Satan and his angels are gathering the kings of earth to fight with Christ, the Saviour says "Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." So Moses and Joshua came down unexpectedly into the camp where Israelites were keeping their idolatrous feast, and beheld with displeasure the naked adorers of the calf : Ex. 32: 15-25.

The Vintage gives us the wrath of God on the followers of the False Christ. It is the gathering of the Tares, and binding them in bundles by the angels, preparatory to burning them. The field of earth is the kingdom of the Son of man. The kingdom which came to heaven in the twelfth chapter, has now arrived at earth.

Out of the kingdom of the Son of man it is time to remove the doers of iniquity. The two classes, of the disciples of Christ, and the followers of the Antichrist, are beautifully contrasted. The disciples of Christ when ripe, are dry, and dead to earth ; for their ripeness is the ripeness of wheat. The followers of the False Christ resemble the grapes, whose ripeness is a fullness of the juices drawn from the earth. The wheat is borne away to the garner in the kingdom of the Father. The grapes are trodden down on earth; the kingdom of the Son of man.

Thus also after the Lord has caught up to himself His watchful ones of the Church (1Thess. 4.), you have in the next chapter the sudden destruction of the men of the world in the midst of their unbelief : (1Thess. 5.). And after the ingathering of the corn and the wine comes the Feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month, or the blest millennial day.

In conclusion, "the Scripture cannot be broken." That theory must be false, which runs counter to the promises and warnings of the Saviour and His apostles. Now, in the teaching of our Lord addressed to His disciples concerning His coming, He continually lays stress upon their being watchful and ready. To those in this attitude His coming will be joy and promotion. To those unready and asleep, it be loss and sorrow. Do any doubt this, after the passages which have been adduced?

1. "One is taken, and one is left." "Watch therefore for ye know not what hour your Lord is coming : " Matt. 25: 41, 42. In the parallel place in Luke follows the parable of the Unjust judge ; to discover to us the day of trouble in its trial to the left ones, under the figure of a widow who has no resource in her affliction, but the importunity of prayer : Luke 17. & 18.

2. Had the master of the house watched, he had not been robbed by the thief's coming. "Therefore be ye also ready, for in the hour ye think not, the Son of man is coming : " Matt. 24: 43, 44.

3. Blessed the steward found watching by the Master. But if he be found behaving like the unbelievers at His coming, the Lord will put him among them: Matt. 24: 45-51.

4. The ready virgins went in with the Bridegroom to the marriage. The unready believers were left, and the shut door kept them out from it. Nor would the Bridegroom open at their appeal: Matt. 25: 10-12.

5. You know not when your Lord shall return. "Watch therefore." "Lest coming suddenly He find you (disciples) sleeping:" Mark 13: 35, 36. But what if they should be spiritually asleep? Then fact comes in to tell us, that to be asleep is to be left by Christ, and to be left is to be caught in the tornado of the Day of Tribulation : Mark 14: 40-72.

6. Blessed the disciples who are found watchful and ready for their Lord. Such shall be honoured and promoted. But woe to them if not: Luke 12: 35-46.

7. The rapture takes place, not in the day of grace, but in the day of reward according to works. Hence if you wish to escape, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged by surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all that are settled on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to be set before the Son of man:" Luke 21: 34-36.

These seven examples will suffice for the candid, and will prove that any doctrine which says to the believer - 'Fear not, son of God, elect unto eternal life, whether you be in pursuit of the world's riches, pleasures, or honours, sunk to the level of the world, or even below it, you will see Christ's face with joy, you will not be left to the coming day of woe', - cannot be true.

May we take heed, that our God may count us worthy of our calling, that we may escape the hour of trouble, and behold the face of our Lord with joy!