

# The Tribulation, and Those Who Are to Pass Through It.

by William Kelly

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*William Kelly's sermon explores the nature of tribulation as revealed in Scripture and the unique blessings of the Church in Christ's redemptive work.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 30:30, Daniel 12:1, Matthew 24:21, Luke 21:20, Romans 8:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:9, Revelation 17:1

**Topics:** "End Times", "Tribulation Period"

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## Description

William Kelly preaches about the great tribulation, emphasizing the distinction between the tribulation that the Christian must endure in this world and the specific trouble at the end of the age that the prophets speak of. He highlights the importance of understanding the unerring testimony of God regarding the final tribulation, which is solely for the Jewish people and not for Christians. Kelly explains the significance of the tribulation falling upon the Jews in the future, the role of Michael the archangel in standing for the children of Daniel's people, and the necessity for the faithful Jewish remnant to escape the impending tribulation by following the Lord's instructions.

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## Transcript

Lecture 6 of 'The Second Coming and Kingdom of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The subject for consideration tonight is the great tribulation, -- the light which Scripture affords as to those on whom it shall fall, and as to those who shall escape it, though destined, according, to the word of God, to be then on the earth; and, consequently, its character and object in the mind of God.

That the Christian must make up his mind to endure tribulation in this world is unquestionable. Our Lord prepares His disciples for no other portion. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation," said He: "but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." The question, therefore, is not at all whether the Christian is to expect tribulation as he passes through this world: there is no doubt of it. But an important inquiry arises as to that specially defined trouble at the end of this age, of which the prophets speak in the Old Testament, and on which, in two of the Gospels, our Lord instructs us. More than once is this, as a connected fact, alluded to in the last prophetic book of the New Testament.

My business now will be to present, with the Lord's help, His own unerring testimony; for we have no liberty to speculate on this subject any more than on others. That there is to be such a final tribulation, we only know from God Himself. Nothing but His word therefore can tell as clearly ascertained and certain truth, who they are that are concerned in the tribulation. Anything else is but fancy, feeling, or a priori reasoning, and therefore impertinent and worthless. One main purpose of Scripture is to deliver the soul from speculation. When men do not seek to understand the prophetic word of God, they more or less begin themselves to prophesy. If they do not set up to be prophets, at least they ought to be prophets, if they presume to speak about the future apart from direct and positive Scripture. Now the Christian man is not to anticipate the future, but with all simplicity to believe what God has said and given him. This is the true cure for speculation. No doubt, in examining the word of God, we need to approach it with chastened dependent spirits. In this there is no preparation to be trusted except that which is of the Holy Ghost, who works in two ways, more particularly, to bring about this right condition of soul. The first is through Christ known and realized as our portion. No man is in a competent or suitable state to enter, as one ought, on the study of prophecy who is not at rest as to his own relation to God in Christ. There is another thing also needful, -- the spirit of self-judgment and self-distrust, which guards one from haste, and from confidence either in one's own thoughts or in the opinions of others. God alone is able to keep and guide such as we are; but: He has proved His willingness to lead us on, because He has spoken so freely in His word, and also given us His Spirit, who searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. God has lifted up the veil from the future; He has opened to us that which must have been otherwise in darkness impenetrable, so that it would have been mere folly and presumption for us to essay a look into the future. The Spirit now shows us things to come (John 16: 13): are we glorifying Him and the Lord Jesus by hearkening?

There was nothing which more distinguished God, as: Isaiah (12, 44, 48) tells us, from the vain idols of the nations. Which of them could disclose the future? Their seers might guess; they might embarrass with ambiguous oracles. God alone could speak with plainness and unhesitating certainty of that which was not yet accomplished; and He has been pleased to communicate to His children the future as known to Him; and this touching the earth and its inhabitants at large, not merely that which concerns themselves. It is a most striking proof of His confidence in His people that He lets us see that which affects others. He tells us of Israel; He tells us of the Gentiles; He tells us of the world outside and its destiny; Just so had He dealt with Abraham of old: He spoke to him not merely of what touched himself and his family, and the line of the promise that was theirs; but, after He had set his heart clear, straight, and free by loving communications that showed His deep personal interest in himself and his posterity for ever, He also spread before him the judgment impending over the world of that day, over Sodom and Gomorrah, where the flagitious ways of man so loudly cried for divine vengeance.

This, and more than this, God now does in the New Testament. First of all He reveals His son, and that Son utterly rejected of men, and, if there was any difference, specially of the Jew. Then He leads those to whom grace gives eternal life in Him to know, that upon the rejected Christ, the Son of the living God, His Church was built, as we have seen. But having brought the Christian to a knowledge of redemption, even the forgiveness of sins through His blood, having given him a new life, even Christ Himself risen from the dead, having sent down the Holy Ghost from heaven to unite the believer with Christ at His right hand, then it is that pre-eminently the Christian is introduced into the confidence of God's thoughts and counsels. Having already blessed the Church with the very highest blessing, it is not merely a question of unfolding to her that which is her own portion; but in truth all the plans which circle around Christ to His own glory. The Church is already compassed with favour and privilege to the very utmost already loved so that God Himself could not love the Christian more. I say it reverently, but withal boldly, that God, infinite as His love

is, will not love the saint more in glory than He loves him now in the midst of all his daily shortcoming, infirmity, and failure, with the continual need of humbling himself in His sight.

It is in presence of the certainty of such perfect love as this, of the consciousness of union with Christ in that new nature which sins not, but loves all that is in God and of God, which lives from Christ and in Christ and to Christ, the Holy Ghost indwelling there -- it is in presence of all this that God can tell out His thoughts to us, treating us as friends, even as our Lord Himself did and said; for whatsoever the Father had told Him, He told us. The moment we understand this wonderful truth and depth and extent of His grace to us in Christ, we wonder not, because it ceases to be a question in the least degree of our desert or competency. Does not Christ deserve it? Is not the Holy Ghost competent? And thus you will see it is entirely founded on the precious truth, that the Church is Christ's body and bride. Now it is the way of one who loves his bride to open out the secrets of his heart to her. (Strange if he did not!) And certainly, whatever an earthly bridegroom may do to his bride, we are always sure Christ duly estimates what is involved in the relationship, and never fails in anything. Moreover, the blood of Christ has washed every believer so clean before God, that the Holy Ghost can come down in virtue and witness of it, and take up His dwelling, as sent from heaven, in the believer on the earth. It is not in heaven that we receive the Holy Ghost, but here on earth. Divine person as He is, how can this be? Because we deserve it? Nay, but because the blood of Christ cannot deserve less. Therefore is it that the Holy Ghost can come down and have perfect sympathy with the new creation which we are made in Christ, and can righteously and holily dwell there, because of the blood of Christ which cleanses us from all sin.

Hence it is to crown this astonishing place of blessing and privilege, which is ours in Christ, that it has pleased God to remove the veil from the future: He lets us know that there are others that He is interested in as well as ourselves. Time was when we should have been envious and jealous; for what is man? Time was when we, even as believers, were so full alas! of our wretched selves, that we should have thought there was something taken from us, had we heard that there were others entirely distinct from us, yet as truly objects of His love. Is it so now? Far from it. Thank God, we can delight in Him, and in all He feels and does. Let the Lord love as He alone can love, we rejoice the more. We are sure it is for His own glory; we are sure Christ is magnified the more. The consequence is, that the Church, confident of the love of Christ for herself, of His perfect matchless affection for the Christian, delights in the outflowings of His goodness, whatever they may be. It is the joy of those who are the body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, to know, that before these high privileges were imparted, known, and enjoyed, there were those He truly loved in the world who will be in heavenly glory.

The Old Testament saints are never spoken of as Christ's body, or God's habitation through the Spirit. Be not alarmed. Probably all you mean by "the church" the Old Testament saints did possess. Are you sure you understand what Scripture means by the Church? You consider it, no doubt, to be the aggregate of the redeemed, of all who are loved by God and born of the Holy Ghost, of all who believe in Christ and have therefore eternal life and are to be in heaven. Now I entirely agree with you in predicating all this of the Old Testament saints: only you are mistaken in calling them therefore the Church, the body of Christ; for none of these privileges, rich as they may be, is the peculiar blessedness of the Church, nor do all of them combined make it up. If I am right, you plainly ignore the Church's nature. And it is evident that there is not a single blessing that you claim for the Old Testament saints that I also could not affirm about them. The difference does not lie here; but it remains true that there are distinctive blessings, through the incomparable grace of God, in virtue of accomplished redemption, a risen Christ and the indwelling Spirit, into which many Christians have feebly, if at all entered.

I do not say this in the smallest degree as a reproach to any. There is no person here, unless he have a short and treacherous memory, who cannot look back and remember when he knew nothing more about it than his neighbours. It is God then who has been awakening His children of late to much momentous but forgotten truth. And what; I think, ought to give an inquirer confidence in seeking to examine the word prayerfully is this, that the lately recovered entrance into the special privileges of the Church is ever inseparable, if it be God's teaching, from an understanding of redemption more fully, and consequently from a deeper enjoyment of peace and liberty in the soul's relations with our God and Father and the Lord Jesus. A practical separation from the world beyond our previous experience is the precious result, and a simpler more devoted service in testimony to Christ.

It is fully admitted, that nothing but Scripture can decide this, as every other question; but here, too, I think we can speak of an enlarged perception of the truth of God in general, as the fruit of seizing the mystery of Christ and the Church. But let us now look back a little at the time and circumstances when our Lord pronounced the wonderful discourse from which a few verses have been read as a preface; it will tend to make the whole field of view more distinct.

In what condition were the disciples when our Lord laid bare the future so fully on mount Olivet? Did they then know redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins? Had they the Holy Ghost the Comforter at that time? Had they the Holy Ghost sealing them, the earnest of the inheritance? Were they baptized of the Holy Ghost into one body? They were believers, no doubt, and had life eternal; but they had none of these further blessings referred to. They were waiting to be redeemed, to know their sins forgiven as a present thing.

Am I speaking without the Bible? I am simply expounding the truth the Holy Ghost has laid down in Romans 3: 25, where He by a peculiar word distinguishes between the relation of the Old Testament believer to redemption and that of believers now. This ought to surprise no person; for, if I may be allowed to use the name of any man on such an occasion as this, I may mention that a well-known dignitary, who cannot be imagined to sympathize with my views or position, admits this fact fully. The Archbishop of Dublin's book on the Synonyms of the New Testament is familiarly known; and no one can accuse that author of advanced thoughts as to prophetic or dispensational truth. Consequently he may be accepted as sufficiently unbiassed to lay down the meaning of the word in the clause which is translated in our common version, "the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." Of course, it is no way a question of human authority, nor, if such an authority were possible and admissible, is it needful; for the fact is abundantly plain and certain. I merely allude to it that others may satisfy themselves that it is nothing recondite, but generally recognised. Dr. Trench then admits, and in strong enough terms, if I remember aright, that "remission (??????) of sins " (as shown, for instance, in Ephesians 1: 7, to be the present portion of the believer) is quite distinct from what the Spirit says of God's dealing with the Old Testament saints. Theirs was properly pretermission (????????), ours is remission.

Thus, apart from the Holy Ghost dwelling in the Christian, or his membership of Christ's body, even in the matter of the great work of redemption the Spirit of God has been pleased to employ a peculiar term to describe the relation of the saints of old as distinct from ours. The exact shade of meaning is, that their sins were passed by, or pretermitted, -- not remitted, in the full sense. Indeed you need not go beyond the ordinary English Bible in its marginal notes; for the alternative of "passing over" is there given. That was the time of God's forbearance, which could not be said of this time, when the righteousness of God without the law is manifested. In short, the marginal rendering more strictly interprets the term employed by the Holy Ghost. God would not use "remission" when thus comparing the past application of His

righteousness with the present. He forebore of old to look at the sins of the saints; He passed them by. But as for believers now, it is a positive "remission of sins." What is the difference? Ah! is it possible that any child of God, in the face of God's wisdom thus plainly distinguishing His ways, could ask the question, "What is the difference?" Do you ask really to understand the difference, or in a cavilling spirit? To seek to appreciate the revealed mind of God is one thing; it is quite another, without care for the answer, to ask, with a sort of sneer, "What is the difference?" It is the feeling of others again, that provided, some how or other, their own sins are forgiven, and they get to heaven, the whole inquiry is frivolous. Alas! that any child of God should so slight the wise and gracious communications of God. Is not Christ precious to God? Is not His work intrinsically and infinitely precious to God? If God, then, makes a difference, who are we to cavil at it, to treat it lightly, or to ask in this selfish spirit, as if it were merely a question of wrangling theologians, instead of His own most worthy way of magnifying His Son and His Son's work?

Now it is God who has made this difference in His word. God Himself calls His dealing with the sins that are past, that is, the sins of Old Testament believers in past times, by a different and to us unusual term. "By the sins that are past" He does not mean our past life, but the sins of believers in past times; and God expresses His dealing with their sins as "passing over," or "pretermission." Looking onward to Christ, He would not judge the elders. In virtue of the foreseen work of the glorious person of Christ, who, after manifesting perfect righteousness in Himself as a man upon the earth, suffered for sin, and so glorified God in the way it was borne and judged in the cross, that it became a question of God's righteousness to the believer -- in virtue of this it was that God passed over sins in past times. But was there to be no more than this? Is it a bare passing over now? Is it simply God's forbearance as of old? Mark the change of tone the moment that the apostle speaks of what is now going on. "To declare, I say, at this time" [in contrast with the past] -- "to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness," without a word added about His forbearance. In fact, to bring in the thought of God's forbearance now is an impeachment of the infinite efficacy of the shed blood of Christ. Suppose that you have contracted a debt, and that a man of substance becomes responsible for you, it is very intelligible that the creditor forbears to sue you, knowing that your surety is the responsible party to whom he looks. But when the debt is paid, does he or any one talk about his forbearance any more? The credit of the surety was the ground for the creditor's forbearance when the debt was not yet discharged; he knew that the liability would be met duly. But when all is paid, is there no difference? Where is the forbearance then? Such too is the analogy now. If you knew what it was to be under the pressure of a debt, and, it may be, in prison for it, you would know the difference between all that and being out of the prison when the debt was paid. Till the work of Christ was done, whatever might be the goodness and mercy of God, it was simply pretermittting sins through His forbearance. At this time, on the contrary, it is the glorious display of His own righteousness, by virtue of which He can afford not only to forgive, but to justify according to all the value of His sacrifice, and all the acceptance of Himself risen from the dead.

All this clearly shows that the disciples, however they were blessed of the Lord when He was upon the earth, were to become possessors of yet deeper blessing. For my own part, I count it as one of the ominous signs of this day of ours, that men regard as a strange tale the assertion of these deeper privileges that have come through Christ's accomplished work on earth and glory in heaven. It is to my own mind the saddest symptom, as indicating where the hearts of the children of God really are. But, however this may be, there is no doubt, from our Lord's own declarations, that He could not then send the Comforter to them. He must go away, and thus send down the Holy Ghost. Accordingly He did go away, and the Comforter came, who was to abide with them for ever; and so He does. Is this nothing? Is it only a little circumstance? Is it the essential thing in your minds to get to heaven, instead of being sent to hell? Is

this your standard of what is essential? Then I understand you, if I cannot sympathise with such a thought or feeling. For, in truth, you are only thinking about yourself, and swallowed up in it: is God, think you? Nay, He is filled with thoughts of His Son, and so blesses us to the full. Have you ever remarked that when a man searches the Bible simply as ministering to his own wants, his need is but partially met, because Christ is hidden from him? Neither will God fully bless at His expense. It is not that God will not be gracious to a poor soul that is seeking to know how he is to be saved from the wrath to come; but assuredly it is a contracted blessing that is gleaned where this is all; it is a blessing abridged by his own unbelief; for, just in proportion as self is the uppermost thought, Christ is shrouded. The infinite grace of God is, as it were, straitened to the measure of one's own wants, which is immeasurably beneath the fulness of Christ.

It may seem that these prefatory remarks, now made, are somewhat wide of the mark; but I trust you will find them really to the point when we fairly launch into our subject.

The Lord begins with His disciples just as they are. He addresses them as His followers, the companions of a rejected Christ, the Son of man that was going to suffer on the cross. He takes them up where they then were. In other words, He does not address them in connection with their place in heaven, as members of His body, which they were going to become but actually were not till baptized by the Holy Ghost. He meets them in His grace, occupied as their minds were with the earth and its hopes, with the nation and city and temple of the Jews. As they point out the buildings of the worldly sanctuary, they ask Him when the destruction should be, of which He had just warned them, and what should be the sign of His coming, and of the end of the world (or "of the age"); for it is hardly needful to tell most here that the word (?????) for "world" as a material system is entirely distinct from that here employed (????), which means a course of time or dispensation governed on certain distinctive principles in this world. The confusion of the two things is one of the unfortunate features of our English Bible, though not at all confined to the authorised version. However this may be, our Lord proceeds to answer their questions about the temple and its destruction, and about His coming at the end of the age, which they put together. His explanation would make evident to them a measure of mistake mingled with these questions; for in this discourse He unravels what was all tangled in their thoughts. He bids them beware of being deceived; for many should come in His name, saying, "I am Christ." Let me ask if this be the character of the Church's deception! Is this the kind of thing Christians are subjected to now? Has it ever been the case in what is called Christendom? Clearly not. So-called Christian lands have not, as a rule, been tried with the question of men pretending to be Messiah in person. No doubt there have been many who have exalted themselves, and virtually claimed what is His prerogative; but they never dreamt of setting up themselves, nor did their devotees set them up, as Christs. We all know there are not a few who, through intellectualism and self-confidence in divine things, have introduced false doctrines; but the assumption to be the Messiah has been confined to a crazy fanatic or two, as it certainly seems to be a character of evil suited to the actual condition and circumstances of the Jews far more than to Christians.

Our Lord then, opening the subject, explains that all the general troubles He warned them of -- nation rising up against nation; and kingdom against kingdom -- were but the beginning of sorrows. Then He comes right into the centre of such specific details as ought to leave beyond question what He has in view. Verse 15 gives us a most distinct intimation. "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand), then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains." Is this a description of the position of the Christian or the Church? What in present circumstances could bring the Church back to Judea? Why should all the

Christians in the world gather into that spot above all others? The very question suffices to dispel the entire fallacy of a thought so gross. The Lord is not at all speaking of Christians as such. He is describing persons about to find themselves at the end of the age in circumstances analogous to the Jewish disciples who then surrounded Him. The Jews, few or many, are supposed to have a temple in Jerusalem, and, of course, to be in their land; and some of them will be godly men. It is a scene of the latter day, because it is clear that the Lord speaks of His own coming in the clouds of heaven as immediately after the tribulation of those days.

It is, therefore, impossible to apply this prophecy in its full extent to the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, or the troubles they endured in consequence of its fall. Indeed, it is evident that the question was about the end of this age; and clearly this has not come yet. As being a sample of a similar class of believers who are yet to rise up in Jerusalem and Judea in the latter day, He prepares them for certain peculiar deceits which might at any time since His rejection affect the Jewish mind, and which will by and by have imparted to them special power, by apparent, and, in a sense, real signs and wonders to mislead souls. He furnishes them with certain tokens by which they might escape the delusion as well as the tribulation of those days -- "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation." What is the meaning of the phrase? "Abomination" in Scripture is habitually the word for an idol; as those of Moab and of Ammon in the Old Testament. There is no ground to suppose it means anything else in the New Testament. In the account given of Babylon in the Revelation, there is no doubt at all that she, the mother of harlots, is there described as also characterized by her abominations or idolatries. So alas! we know it has been in Christendom. The city that sits upon the seven hills has always been famous for her idolatries: as in Pagan times, so now; and so it will be to her judgment by God. Even if Babylon should assume a new form adapted to the last days, there will be a similar badge of inveterate idolatry to the close. Here too I think there can be no question whatever that our Lord meant an idol. But then this should be accompanied by a certain peculiarity. Not merely an ensnaring object, but one that would ensure desolation in its train; for the Lord calls it the "abomination of desolation." Then again it was "spoken of by Daniel the prophet," who defines the time, place, and circumstances in chapter 12. To this special attention is called by our Lord, not by ecclesiastics, as some have strangely conjectured, against all evidence and every fact. Further, it was to stand where it ought not, "in the holy place;" which, it appears to me, notwithstanding the absence of the Greek article,\* beyond all fair question, must mean the sanctuary in Jerusalem.

\* As English admits of "market," "church," "town," "country," without the article, so did Greek yet more freely.

Thus the Lord is speaking about Judea, of Jewish disciples, of a special final object of fatal idolatry; and so here He speaks of it as standing in some part of the temple, which was, of course, a familiar sound to the disciples. Had any other sanctuary or spot been intended, it must, I conceive, surely have been defined more carefully. When they saw that idol set up there, spoken of by Daniel the prophet (which they would do well not only to read but understand), let it be the signal for instant flight. We shall find the importance of this in a few moments; but, on the face of the Scripture, the warning of the Lord was there. He foresaw that it would be misunderstood. He knew that Christendom would ignore and forget Israel, their dangers and their hopes; that the Gentiles (wise in their own conceit (Rom. 11) of being the end and scope of prophecy, as if Israel had fallen irrevocably and they themselves had a lease for ever of God's calling,) would be absorbed in their own circumstances. They would apply passages like these merely to what is past, as to Jews and Pagans, or, perhaps, if keen controversialists, they might see in them a cloud overhanging Protestantism, if Papists, or the converse. The Lord accordingly recalled the disciples to the

prophet Daniel, who speaks of this desolating abomination as 1290 days before the closing scenes of Israel's deliverance, not at the Roman captivity and dispersion. With exact conformity our Lord speaks of its setting up before the unparalleled but short tribulation, which is immediately followed by His ingathering of elect Israel. Clearly therefore it is the same scene, and yet future.

The setting up of this idol in the holy place is the Lord's appointed signal for the disciples to escape. "Let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains." Further, so rapid was to be the flight, that a man was not even to come down from the housetop to take his property from his house -- was not even to return from the fields to take his clothes. Not a moment was to be lost for bare life. Sorrow, sorrow to those who had babes unborn or lately born; for how could they thus flee? Again, they were to pray that their flight might not be in winter nor on Sabbath. How comes here the Sabbath-day? It is well-known -- I trust every believer here knows it -- that the day for us is the Lord's-day. I do not mean by this to lower the sanctity of the day that the Lord has been pleased to initiate and give the Christian, but the very contrary. The difference between the Jewish Sabbath and our Lord's-day, is not that the seventh day or Sabbath is more holy, but rather that its holiness is of a lower character than that which now clothes the first day of the week or Lord's-day in the eyes of the Christian. The Sabbath was a day of external rest; it was a day on which every one, slaves, nay, the very beasts of burden, were to enjoy repose according to commandment. The Lord's-day, as such, is neither of the first creation nor of the law, like the Sabbath. It is characteristically of the new creation and of grace, in contrast with the associations of the sabbath. It is not the epoch in which we find the first man, Adam, an unfallen man, nor is it the sign which God subsequently made so special between Him and Israel; but the infinitely brighter day, that is only known to faith, that was ushered in by the Second man, triumphant for ever over sin, death, and judgment, who, in virtue of His own triumph, has brought those that believe in Him out of their sins, even now to God. Therefore do I claim for the Lord's-day a character of sanctity as much transcending the Adamic or Mosaic Sabbath of Jehovah as the Second man is superior to the first, as much, too, as grace rises above law.

But it is not the Lord's-day in view of Christians that is spoken of here, but that very different day, the Sabbath in view of Jewish disciples, present and future. Accordingly the context is quite in character with the Sabbath-day. It is a question of those in Judea, and no others, fleeing to the neighbouring mountains, as the sign was an idol set up somewhere in the Temple of Jerusalem. Hence they are to pray that their flight might not be on that day, any more than in winter time. Is there a Christian here who would have a conscience about himself or another fleeing on the Lord's-day, if it were a matter of life and death? Would he scruple for just or gracious reasons to travel ever so many miles on that day? Certainly if the Christian were under the law as to the Sabbath, nothing would justify such breaches of it. Nor does the Lord weaken but maintain its authority by His direction that they should pray for any other day. The question for us is: Are we under the authority of the Sabbath? Or is our day the Lord's-day? Were we really on the former ground our duty would be plain, and we could not on the Sabbath do such things rightly. If it is the Lord's-day, on the contrary, you may magnify it according to what is calculated to glorify Him. Suppose a man could walk twenty miles on the first day of the week, and preach twenty sermons, do you think he would be guilty of a bad work? I trow not: it were assuredly a good and acceptable service if he preached the truth. But here the disciples are manifestly under the law of the Sabbath. How evidently then is it another atmosphere you own as Christians! The obligation of the Sabbath was all right for those who were under the law. The Christian stands in connection with a dead and risen Saviour, and the Lord's-day is the symbol of his blessing. Therefore it is that the Church universal keeps the Lord's-day, not the Sabbath-day, and quite right too, though (strange to say) so many who do it aver that it is all one and the same thing.

All this then indicates a different character of testimony, and a distinct class of disciples. These will both appear in due time in Jerusalem before the present age closes. This future Jewish remnant is represented by the men that were then before the Lord, who therefore begins, you may have observed, with their place as Jewish disciples. The discourse grows out of their questions about Jewish anticipations. The Lord answers them accordingly. They were thus to pray that their flight might not be in winter (which would create natural impediments) nor on the Sabbath (when the law would bar a flight of any distance worth taking). It is Jews, not Christians, who are thus in the mind of the Lord and the scope of this part of the discourse. And so the great point here is to escape with the natural life. Do you not know that the language of the Spirit to the Christian is wholly different? It is the greatest honour for a Christian to die for Christ. In his case, therefore, who looks for resurrection and heaven with Christ above as his proper hope, it is no question of flesh being saved; but here it is exactly this. What am I to infer from it all? That it is not a description of Christians, which the Lord is here pursuing, but of godly Jews, and at the end of the age especially. These two are disciples, but their associations and expectations are Jewish. The land, the city, the sanctuary, the law of the Sabbath, plainly mark them out. The salient points, not only of outward circumstances but of their soul's experience, and walk, and worship, are rather in contrast with Christianity than in accordance with it.

"For then," our Lord says immediately after, "shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time ; no, nor ever shall be." Am I not thoroughly warranted in saying, that there is no evidence that this tribulation falls upon Christians as far as this passage goes? The foregoing indications point clearly and exclusively to Jewish disciples who will be found in Judea in the latter day, cleaving to the law and to the testimony keeping the commandments of God, as is said elsewhere, and having the testimony (i.e. the prophetic testimony) of Jesus Christ, but, notwithstanding, or rather because of this, not in the full privileges of Christians now. They will be Jewish disciples in relation with the holy place, and so resenting an idol there; they will be keeping the seventh day, and not the first. These in Judea, and these only, as far as this Scripture proves, are to flee to the mountains, and so escape this fiercest of all tribulations;\* for it is expressly said to exceed all from the creation to the end of time. Not a hint of Christians is to be traced where it is here spoken of.

\* All the description shows that it is a tribulation as brief as it is hot. It is an error, therefore, to look for its accomplishment in the long history of the Jews scattered over the earth. Not so: it is in Jerusalem that this tribulation rages, for the mountains at hand will hide the remnant; and so awful its fury, that "except those days should be shortened, no flesh should be saved; but for the elect's sake those day shall be shortened:" language plainly inconsistent with a reference to the protracted sufferings of the Jews in Gentile lands. It is a short and future crisis in the land.

This conclusion is entirely confirmed by what follows; for our Lord tells us, "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved." It is the life of this world; and the importance of the natural life to the Jew is, that he expects the Messiah to come into this world and reign over Israel. And so the Lord will reign. But if the Jew desires to wait for Him, it is to bless him as a living man in the world. That is, it is a saving of flesh, as here. He looks for the Messiah to exalt their nation, bless their land, vanquish their foes, and confer every other good in that bright day of glory which is to dawn upon the world. And it is quite true, as far as it goes, though the truth even for Israel goes much beyond it.

But Christ warns them further -- "Then, if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not." Let me ask if a Christian man would be in danger from such cries as these? Suppose a preacher were to tell you that Christ was in the city, or at Paddington, would you not judge that the man was (hardly

a rogue -- it is too extravagant for that, but) out of his mind? "The Lord Jesus in the city?" "What! have I to go to Paddington to see the Lord?" "No," the Christian at once says, "I know He is coming, but He will come from heaven to bring me there; when He descends into the air, I shall hear and see Him and be in that instant caught up, changed into the likeness of His glory, to be with Him where He is, in the Father's house above." On the other hand, the Jew expects Christ upon earth, and rightly expects Him there, and another Jewish prophet furnishes the firm ground for it. Has not Zechariah said that His feet shall stand upon mount Olivet? To be sure he has, and therefore if the Jew be occupied with such an expectation, he might not unnaturally look for some preparatory movement before that great public display in favour of his nation. He might readily receive the rumour that the great Deliverer was already in the desert, where the faithful were expected to repair; or that He was in the secret chambers, where they ought to muster around Him. We can easily conceive these impious frauds of Satan to deceive the elect at such a time who had such expectations. Thus they might be told that their Messiah was still outside, or secretly within, as might best suit the aim of the enemy and the injury of the godly. And we know that there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, who shall show great signs and wonders; nay more, that the Antichrist is to be accepted by the mass as Christ. These things might, if possible, deceive the very elect among the Jews; but could the Christian, ever so weak and uninstructed, credit such delusions? Impossible, I humbly but firmly think. He must have given up all his hopes of Christ in heaven, all the common faith that the Holy Ghost had communicated and confirmed in his inmost soul, before he could be exposed to the influence of these pretensions and rumours, aptly calculated as they undoubtedly are to deceive the Jew. For the prophet declares that they shall have Christ coming upon the earth to the discomfiture of their foes; and they might not unreasonably be led away by reports of Him here or there, before that great manifestation on Olivet. Accordingly to a Jewish remnant all this was of the deepest moment, and the Lord warns them beforehand. (Ver. 23-26.) The Holy Ghost never warns the Christian thus. Like those to us, it is suited to the condition of those who are warned. We know that we shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

But the Jewish disciples in that day, though they have no such hope as ours, are not to be deceived by these calls to and fro. They are not to go forth, nor are they to believe what men say of any secret presence. "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Instantaneous and public will it be. All thought of applying this to the past capture of Jerusalem is an utter absurdity. Did the Romans come out of the east? Did they shine even unto the west? I should have thought their direction was just the contrary of what is predicted here. But when the Son of man comes in bodily presence, such no doubt is the fitting simile to set it forth; lightning-like will be the sudden and bright appearing of the Lord Jesus from heaven. Is that our hope? Does Scripture ever present our Lord as the lightning coming to receive the Church? Is it so a Bridegroom comes for his Bride? On the other hand, if He come then and thus to judge, if the abomination of desolation pollute the holy place in Jerusalem, if a man, the Antichrist, sit in the temple as God, I can understand that the shining of the lightning would be a most appropriate figure for so coming and dealing. Incongruous for the ineffable peace and heavenly joy of the meeting between the Bridegroom and the Bride, it is precisely suited for His presence in judgment which is needful to deliver the Jew.

But more: "Wheresoever the carcass is." Has it then come to this? The "carcass!" Is this too the Church? Does the Lord call His body a "carcass"? Ah! what folly and ruinous mischief, when men read Scripture according to tradition, or their own will. He that makes self his one object even in Scripture, who leaves no room for the Jew, but finds the Christian here, there, and everywhere, invariably brings a blight upon his own head. Instead of the precious body of Christ, formed by the Holy Ghost, in union with Him above, this system reduces us here to a "carcass!" Instead of the blessed hope of Him who loves the Church

receiving it unto Himself, that we may be with Him in heaven, it is the eagles or vultures gathering together. Others again, from ancient days to our own, reverse the application, but with what result? Any improvement? It may appear incredible, but it is the sad truth, that grave men have been beguiled into the irreverent exegesis that the saints, the risen and translated saints, are the eagles, and that the blessed Lord (may He forgive the wrong!) is the carcass, the object which gathers these birds of prey together. I do not feel that either explanation deserves more words in refutation; but baseless and even profane as they are, the important point to note is that they appear to be the necessary consequence of applying the passage, as is popularly done, to the coming of Christ to receive the saints to Himself above: and, as I judge, the most offensive of these rival abominations is the more logical deduction from these mistaken premises. Take the text in connection with the judgment of the Jews, and all is clear, solemn, and harmonious with other Scriptures. Where the life is fled, and there is nothing but moral death, spite of high pretension, there will concentrate the instruments of final and divine vengeance. We are upon earthly ground here, and not heavenly hopes. We are looking upon the desperate evil that shall characterize Jerusalem in the last days. Accordingly the eagles come there, judgment unsparing and various proceeds, when the Lord shall purge out every abomination and put an end to every desolator, and aid His elect but long feeble Israel, some of whom had been fleeing in terror to escape the tribulation of the days thus past for ever.

Is it then too strong to affirm that there is not a thought nor a figure that fits in with the Church's hope, while everything is exactly characteristic of the dealing of the Lord with the Jews in the latter day? It may be said, that the impression has just been given that some portions of these chapters do really apply to Christendom. It is now reaffirmed; for I have no doubt that this discourse of our Lord is not confined to the Jews. What proves it is, that towards the end of chap. 25 we have a description given of the Son of man sitting upon the throne of His glory when He comes, and all His holy angels with Him; and then shall be gathered before Him all nations. These are not Jews of course. We must, therefore, make room for a larger compass than that which is bounded by Jews, We must, at the very least, let in the Gentiles, all of them who shall be gathered before the throne of the Son of man. It is not the throne in which He shall judge the dead; for it is unscriptural and absurd to imagine such a thing, as that before the great white throne there shall be nations as such. Whoever heard of such a thought or expression as "nations" after the resurrection? Is not the notion of "all the nations" entirely limited and only suitable to men living on the earth? This being so, you have a separation made by the King (for it is in this capacity the Son of man here acts) between those who were proved righteous on one hand, and those who were as manifestly unrighteous on the other; but it is, I repeat, a dealing, however grave and final, with nations. Thus, at the beginning of this great prophetic discourse of our Lord, the Jews are disposed of, and at the end of it the Gentiles. But what occupies its middle? It is the Christian part. Hence that which distinguished the earlier section -- the question about the end of the age, a crowd of local and legal associations, as express allusion to the sanctuary, the Sabbath, and the land of Judea, with the neighbouring mountains -- all this entirely disappears. Certainly these things have nothing to do with the world as a whole. They belong specifically and solely to a small part of the earth and its inhabitants, to the Holy Land and the Jews, and, from verse 15, to a short crisis, which brings their disasters to a head, and is followed by their final deliverance and gathering under the Son of man from the four winds.

But perhaps it may be argued, as it has been, that "the elect" must mean Christians. Now I would ask all such if they really think that the Lord has chosen none but Christians? Would they deprive the Lord of His prerogative to choose as He will according to His sovereign will and wisdom? It is plain that ignorance of Him and of His word is the real reason why men take such strange ground, and make such a narrowing of

the wonderful purposes and ways of God. It is but another form of that wretched unbelief which kept us so long without Christ, and springs up ever and anon after we have got Christ. But as sure as it does, it darkens the eye and straitens the heart from embracing the vast extent of God's love, and the various glory in which Christ will manifest His own. In point of fact, Christ will have relations not only with the Jews, but with the Gentiles too, besides the Church, His body. Therefore it is plain that, in order to know who are in particular contemplated in any given Scripture, we must always interpret the text by the context. If the apostle is discussing Christian privilege, and talks of the elect, as in Romans 8, we know that he there means none but the Christian election; but if Isaiah is occupied with the Jews in their day of predicted glory (Isa. 65: 8-25), and speaks of "mine elect," he means only the Jewish elect. The surroundings of the particular text furnish the only sure means of deciding the sense of the Bible; and indeed a similar principle applies to every other book. If so, the Lord, in Matt. 24, has in view solely elect persons connected with Judea. As He died for that nation, and not exclusively for the scattered children of God, so He speaks now about His chosen Israelites in every land of their exile under heaven. This is confirmed by the fact, that there is no intimation here of any being taken up to heaven. There is no allusion to resurrection whatever. He had spoken of flesh being saved, as we saw living Israelites had to be hidden away from the perils, and guarded from the deceits, of the last days of this age. And now, when He comes at the hour of their deepest need, when they seem on the point of being destroyed for ever, and He suddenly appears in the clouds of heaven, what is the effect? "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." All the tribes of the earth mourn, and this before His elect are gathered by the providential messengers of His will.

Now, if you apply this to the Christian translation, it is obvious that your interpretation makes Scripture contradict itself. For when Paul was writing to the Colossians, he says that, "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear With Him in glory." Here, when our Lord addresses Jewish disciples upon their future, He tells them of His own visible coming in the clouds of heaven, and how all the tribes of the earth (or land, as the context would seem to imply it means) will mourn seeing Him thus coming with power and glory in the clouds of heaven; after which He sends out His angels, with loud trumpet-sound, to gather together His elect from every quarter. Evidently the mass will have seen Christ, and be full of anguish at His sight, before the elect are gathered under the Son of man. There is not a hint of their being caught up or of their appearing with Christ. Thus the truth of Scripture is perfectly plain, provided we distinguish the parties that the Lord treats of. If the subject be about Christians, their place is with Him in heaven, and they shall accompany Him when He comes from heaven; or rather, in the perfectly accurate words of the apostle, when Christ, our life, shall appear, they also are to appear with Him in glory. Whereas in Matt. 24 Christ appears, and all the tribes of the earth or land are troubled at the sight of Him; and then the elect of Israel are gathered by angels from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Hence we have to note not identity but contrast between the two parties. They are both, it is true, destined for blessing; but one is for heavenly places with Christ, and therefore they appear with Him when He appears from heaven; the other is gathered upon earth (where they are) by the intervention of angels. The providential agents of God are employed to gather together His people who are scattered over the world. The parable of the fig-tree (verses 32, 33) confirms one in this; for it is the standing badge of Israel

nationally. So too "this generation" has nothing to do with the Christian, but means that Christ-rejecting race of Jews which is not yet extinct. As to all this the Lord's words are sure, whatever theology may say to the contrary: "Heaven and earth shall pass away," but they shall not. Yet it is a hidden day and hour, but as sure as those of Noah, and after that pattern, for the godly remnant that survive shall pass through these scenes of judgment, and live to govern the renovated earth, instead of being removed, as the Church will be, like Enoch, to the realms above. Hence it is the converse of our portion; for here one is taken in judgment, the other left in mercy. (36-41.)

The next three verses (42-44) are a kind of transition, being the just application of what had been urged as a motive for watching and readiness for the coming of the Son of man, and an introduction to what follows. Next, from verse 45 comes the distinctively Christian portion of the Lord's prophecy, consisting of three intermediate parables: that of the Household Servants; that of the ten Virgins; and that of the Talents. These compose the part which relates to Christendom. The order too, instead of being a difficulty as it might appear on a hasty glance, seems to me perfectly beautiful. The Lord begins with the Jews, because the disciples who actually surrounded Him were, practically, in Jewish circumstances then. When He has set out their destiny with special reference to the end of the age and His own coming, He then turns to the Christian part in parabolic language, which would open out on these very disciples when the Jews refused the testimony of the Holy Ghost; that is to say, which drops all allusion to the Jew, and assumes that wide character which Christianity demands. The instruction here is presented in the most general forms, because the Lord is looking onward to Christians in any or every quarter of the earth; and therefore we hear no more of the unparalleled tribulation, nor of the end of the age, any more than of the land, or the sanctuary, or the Sabbath. Lastly, as we saw, when the parabolic views of the Christian part are closed, a concluding picture winds up the prophecy about the Gentiles who will be gathered before the Son of man when He is come to reign over the earth (Matt. 25: 31-46); but this only by the way to give a complete sketch of the bearing of these two chapters.

Let me notice, as briefly as may be, the other Scriptures which refer to the tribulation. What we have seen in Matthew 24 is the most detailed.

The prophet Daniel, you will recollect, is referred to by our Lord in the first gospel; so we can next turn to him. In Dan. 12 (the one cited) we read these cheering words: "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people." Can there be a doubt what people are meant by Daniel's people? Were they Gentiles, or were they Jews? It cannot be questioned. It was of the Jews, and their troubles and degradation, that Daniel treated, during which times the Gentiles would be allotted the supreme power in the earth; and accordingly the object of the prophecy everywhere is to show the downfall of the Gentiles, to make way for the Jews in the end. How needed this was to strengthen Daniel, or any Israelite indeed like him, in the face of the troubles that had then befallen and yet awaited the Jews! They had been carried into captivity by the first of the imperial Gentile powers, of whom the prophet receives a measured account in their successive rise and fall during which the Jews were to suffer. But even from the first God would have His servant comforted with the certainty, that the proud Gentiles must be judged and the Jews at length be delivered. When they came to their deepest strait, Michael the archangel would stand for them against all adversaries. Such is the critical turn of affairs here brought before Daniel. "And at that time shall Michael stand up" (instead of the Jews being allowed to suffer any longer), "the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

It is evident on the face of it, how exactly this statement falls in with the plain bearing of our Lord's prophecy. In that portion of it where He is providing for the special exigencies of Jewish disciples in the latter day (as represented by the four men who were then along with Him), there, and there only, is there any reference to this unequalled tribulation. It is our Lord Himself who quotes Daniel the prophet, with a charge to understand him. We open Daniel, and, as might be expected, the same truth substantially appears. Not that our Lord merely draws on or reiterates His servant's resources; but He knew His own word, and He at least could not misunderstand. "Whoso readeth let him understand." It is we who have to take care; it is we who need to understand what we read. How is it that controversial divines have brought the Pope in here? Because they were occupied with their own things, not the things of Jesus Christ. This Scripture does not touch the Pope, whatever may have been the long train of impieties and atrocious cruelties perpetrated by the Papacy. I doubt not that it is a system which embodies essentially, though not exclusively, the mystery of lawlessness, and that the great whore of Rev. 17 finds her centre in Rome. But there is another character of things here. It is presumptuous to determine beforehand that there can be no height or depth of wickedness more audacious than that which has been. It is contrary to all analogy that evil should not be at its maximum when judgment falls. It is vain and unbelieving to reason in the teeth of plain Scripture. "Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations." Idolatry was smitten by Assyria and Babylon, as the rejection of Christ was by the unconscious Romans. What will it be when Antichrist is received? Trouble beyond all breaks out upon the children of Daniel's people; but it is immediately before the triumphant deliverance of the godly ones. Is it not folly to apply this to Popery? It is quite as great, if not greater, absurdity, on the part of the rationalists, who can only see in it some past siege of Jerusalem. Let them weigh a decisive reason. There have been many sieges of Jerusalem, and one most celebrated since the gospel appeared; but were the Jews then delivered? Did the Lord come in the clouds of heaven to gather His chosen by angels when the city was invested by the Romans under Titus?

It may interest some here to notice the divine accuracy with which our Lord predicted the Roman siege, as recorded in the gospel of Luke. (21) This is quite passed over in the corresponding passage of Matthew, and even Mark. But Luke mentions, as an event previous to the times of the end, that Jerusalem would be seen "compassed with armies." The Lord singles out this feature. Many sieges of the holy city had there been, but only once, it is said, was Jerusalem thus invested. Besides, our Lord distinguishes that occasion from the future. Examine Luke 21, and you will find that the compassing of Jerusalem with armies, its fall, and the captivity of the Jews, are expressly before the time of the end begins. (Compare verses 20-24 with verses 25-28.) After the capture, Jerusalem is supposed to be still trodden down during a given though unmeasured period. "And Jerusalem shall be trodden of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." This is going on still. The final scene is characterized not only by such tribulation as exceeds all the past of the Jews, not only by distress of nations, but also by the fact that this greatest time of sorrow is immediately followed by unexampled victory for the Jews. The destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was followed not by deliverance but by servitude; not by the gathering together of the children of Israel into their own land, but by their being led away captive into all nations. Thus the facts, and above all Luke's account, enable us to show the clear contrast of what was then with what is to be by and by. The conclusion, therefore, is certain and inevitable to the believer, that the Lord and Daniel both speak of the unequalled time of trouble for the Jew. It is a tribulation which: must fall upon that people, and precedes the mighty deliverance which clearly has not yet been wrought in their favour. Therefore the tribulation must be future because the deliverance is unquestionably future; for the word of God inseparably connects them together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days follows our Lord's appearing, to rescue them from ruin and every other ill and sorrow. Neither the one nor the other can yet be an

accomplished fact.

It is well to remark distinctly, in the Scriptures which have come thus far under review, that the people who are in question, upon whom the tribulation falls, are the Jews. Not a word is said about Christians. No doubt there are some other Scriptures which can be produced. It must be shown in them, if anywhere, that Christians will be on earth at that time, in order to make out the case that Christians are to pass through it. Vague notions will not suffice, nor theories; though I may say that one might well wonder at those who talk about the honour of going through these scenes of earthly horror. Do these speculatists comprehend its moral import? Do they know the retributive grounds of that tribulation? Probably they have not even thought of enquiring. I grant you, that to endure temptation at any time is blessed; to suffer for righteousness' sake does not fail of a reward; to suffer for Christ and with Christ is the precious portion of the faithful Christian. "They that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," as the apostle tells us; but is any man so uninstructed as to imagine this the character of the tribulation in the last days? If it were the honour and the privilege, which they have so hastily assumed, do they believe that the Lord would tell the disciples how to escape it? nay, make it a point of obedience to flee from it to the mountains? Does this hang together? Does He ever let the Christian know how he is to escape tribulation? No confusion more preposterous in all its parts. The cases are in contrast, not the same. It is the allotted portion, and privilege, and glory of the Christian to suffer for Christ's sake. None should be moved by these afflictions, still less fly from them as if they were an evil; "for yourselves know," says St. Paul to young believers, "that we are appointed hereunto." Such is the doctrine of the New Testament for the Christian. "To you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake."

How comes it then, that, if passing through this greatest tribulation be a prize, the Lord so carefully instructs His faithful ones how to deprive themselves of that honour? The simple fact is, that the entire system, which thus reasons or imagines, is at issue with the word of God. The tribulation of those days is no honour, but the severest infliction on sin, and unbelief, and apostasy. It is a judicial punishment on the Jewish nation, because they broke the law, despised the Messiah, and will then have received the Antichrist, "the king."

Is it an honour to be buffeted for the most desperate wickedness against God and His Christ? to encounter a trouble that is the divine scourge for all this iniquity? Yet this is the character of the tribulation which some have so inconsiderately thought and called an honour. Accordingly Scripture proves, that the people that rebelled against God, crucified their Messiah, despised the gospel and bowed down to the beast and the false prophet, will in the end suffer this tribulation.

It will fall upon them when the Antichrist has set up an idol in Jerusalem, and he thinks to have it all his own way there, supported, alas! by the powers of the West. Such is the future assigned by Scripture to the revived empire with its divided kingdoms of Europe. Joining the apostate Jews (for Judaism and Christendom will yet coalesce), they will be the material supports of the man that will set himself up as God in the temple of Jerusalem, who will none the less also establish idolatry there.

To this end everything tends. It is the educated, civilized West that will before the world sustain and glorify, not the Saviour, but the son of perdition, the final instrument of the serpent's power in deceit and destruction for the last days. The desolator, the Assyrian scourge, will come down upon these victims of Satan. The East, wicked as it is and will then be, is not at any rate prepared to endorse the apostasy and man of sin, and so will pour down its countless hosts on Palestine, in chastisement under God upon the

lawless one and his party.

Hence Jerusalem in that day acquires such painful interest and importance; for God permits the great desolator (whatever may be his designs) to descend like an avalanche from the North and East. "Behold Jehovah hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand." This attack of the eastern powers will at once arouse and attract to Palestine the West, and there both West and East shall find their doom successively at the hand of the Lord.

Before this, however, the eastern power will scourge the Jews; but the faithful ones, if they listen to our Lord's warning, will themselves entirely escape the tribulation. Those in Judea will flee, according to His word, and be hidden from man; so that, when the Lord destroys all the apostates, Jew or Gentile, all His enemies, whether of the West or the East, He will gather back all the Israel of God, whether these or others, who may be then scattered over the face of the earth.

I repeat, then, that in the New Testament tribulation is spoken of as the Christian's daily companion. It is a gift of grace which a saint is not to run away from, but to thank God and take courage for; whereas it is beyond controversy, that when the tribulation predicted by the Lord and the prophets falls on Judea and Jerusalem, our Lord Himself expressly provides minute directions for the faithful who are there to escape. And this, some people will tell you, is the tribulation we ought all to account so glorious, and which it is such rank cowardice to shirk! Infatuation could hardly go farther. My brethren, if this were but the word of the Lord, not the braying of ignorance, who of us would not, by His grace, welcome fire or water in obedience and love to Him? But it is the very reverse of all H

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