

MATTHEW 24 INTENDED FOR CHRISTIANS

Frank H. White Examines Matthew 24

Some time after the foregoing was written, there came into my hands a copy of an excellent booklet, "The Saints' Rest and Rapture: When and for Whom?" by Frank H. White, from which I take the liberty to quote the following:

It is often objected that the prophetic instructions and warnings given by our Lord in Matthew 24 have no direct bearing on ourselves as present-day believers. Rather, the disciples, including Peter, James, and John (who had forsaken all and followed Christ), were representatives not of "The Church of the Firstborn," but of a future "Jewish Remnant" who will be found in the place of testimony during the last Great Tribulation, "after the Church has been Raptured";¹ others affirm that they represent those who will be converted under the preaching of "The Gospel of the Kingdom" after the completion and removal of the body of Christ".²

That our Lord, in Matthew 24, was not addressing Jews as such is abundantly clear from the concluding verses of Chapter 23, which indeed seem expressly recorded to warn us against such a thought, marking, as they do, the close of the Savior's personal ministry in Jerusalem, and containing His solemn and significant declaration that they (the Jewish people) should see him no more **until** his return in glory. "For I say to you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth till ye shall say, 'Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.'"

After speaking these words, it is written, "Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple: and His disciples came to Him"--"His disciples" who had left all, and followed Him, and of whom He witnessed, "Ye are they who have continued with Me in My temptations," (Luke 22:28)--to whom a little after He said, "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knows not what his lord does: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you" (John 15:15). The very same disciples of whom he afterwards testified, "They have kept Thy word. They have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me are of Thee. For I have given unto them the words which Thou gave Me" (John 17:6-8). The very same disciples for whom he then prayed, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory" (John 17:24).

If such disciples were not Christians proper, and so do not properly represent us in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, when instructed by the Lord with respect to circumstances that should surround them **after** His departure, **and after they should have received the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven**, when do they represent us, if at all? [B. W. Newton]³

If we reject our Lord's counsel in the above Scriptures, can we consistently claim

- 1 "When the Church, which is Christ' Body, has been received into glory a Jewish remnant of elect ones shall take her place as witness bearers and be recognized as the then company of God's saints and Christ's servants on earth." So says "the Morning Star", London, England, Nov., 1894.
- 2 I deal with this theory in the chapter in Volume 2, "Who Will Preach the Gospel During the Great Tribulation?", in which chapter I show that the only "Gospel" that will then be preached is "The Everlasting Gospel", and this only by angelic ministry; conditions then being such as to make impossible any preaching by human beings.
- 3 It is true they were Jews by nature and externally surrounded by Jewish circumstances and inwardly filled with Jewish prejudices; nevertheless they were, by faith in His name, His own disciples, who had received and confessed Him as Lord and Saviour, and so had become the sons of God, to be afterwards manifested in glory with us who have believed on Him "through their word". John 1:12; 17:20; Romans 8:19-23; Hebrews 2:10. [This footnote by Mr. White]

His comfort in John 13 to 17? Were not the Apostles quite as much Jews by nature and by earthly location, when that precious promise fell on their opened ears, in John 14:3, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself", as when the same Lord said to the **same company** a few hours before, "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and puts forth leaves, ye know that summer is near: so ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that HE (R.V.) is nigh, even at the doors," Mark 13:28,29? And as if anticipating the teaching against which we contend, He adds, "And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." Mark 13:37.

Must we no longer take our marching orders as preachers and teachers from the Lord's great and final commission, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you?"⁴ Matt. 28:19, R.V. Again, are we prepared to give up that blessed assurance of our Lord's, "And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age"? Matt. 28:20, R.V.

Indeed some have not hesitated to accept this latter inevitable conclusion, and to affirm that "the Lord's Supper as recorded in the Gospels would not be binding upon us in this dispensation had not the Apostle Paul received of the Lord a **special** revelation on the subject".⁵

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- 4 In the Gospels, many instructions were addressed to the disciples in their then present circumstances, which ceased to exist after the death and resurrection of their Lord, and all such instructions were of necessity limited to the time then present. Thus it is not said to us, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles," Matt. 10:5. But it is otherwise with those passages which were intended to guide their service during the time of His personal absence from them. B. W. Newton, "Coming of the Lord" page 17. [This footnote by Mr. White.]
- 5 In "What Did Paul Teach the Thessalonians?", which will appear in Volume 2, I show, indisputably, that Paul either possessed or had access to a copy of the Gospel by Matthew; and that when he wrote, "This we say unto you by the word of the Lord", etc., 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17, he meant, "the word of the Lord" as contained in Matthew 24:29-31. One has only to compare Paul's words to the Corinthians on the subject of the Lord's Supper, 1 Corinthians 11:23-25, with the Lord's own words about it, Matthew 26:26-28, to see that the Apostle could easily have obtained his information concerning the Lord's Supper from his copy of Matthew's Gospel, which contains this "word of the Lord" also. Paul's personal acquaintance with "the twelve" would furnish him the few extra details contained in his account which are not recorded by Matthew. Or a man as intelligent as Paul was, and as well acquainted with the Jewish feasts, including the Passover, which so graphically typifies the death of "The Lamb of God" for the sins and life of the world, could easily have deduced those extra trifling details from Matthew's record of the last supper. Thus Paul could just as well say in this case, "I have received of the Lord", etc., as in the other case, "This we say unto you by the word of the Lord", etc., for in each case, what he mentioned was contained in the words of the Lord Jesus Christ as found in Matthew's Gospel. If the Lord had first given Matthew's Gospel, in which the Lord's Supper is included, to the disciples as Jews--i.e., as representing not the Church but the Jewish Remnant of the Tribulation--and then had revealed that supper to Paul as "Church Truth", He would have been bestowing upon the Church, apparently as an afterthought, something which He had stolen from the Jewish Remnant; whose possession it was once it was given to them. I say "stolen from the Jewish Remnant" because by making the Lord's Supper "Church Truth", that is to say, a Christian ordinance, necessarily the Jewish Remnant was deprived of it; for, as I explain and stress in other parts of these volumes, there is absolutely no evidence that the Jewish Remnant will become believers in the Lord Jesus Christ until He shall have revealed Himself to their nation as such at the end of the Tribulation: and so a Christian ordinance could not be made use of by them during the Tribulation, since, at the best, until the Lord shall return, they will be only a company of pious not Christian Jews. Although only extreme Pre-Tribulation-Rapturists hold this absurd idea, yet it is a result of that doctrine, and so the tree must be adjudged evil because it bears such evil fruit. The only purpose in endeavoring to make all or the great part of Matthew 24 "Jewish Remnant Teaching" is TO GET RID OF VERSES 29 TO 31, BECAUSE IF ACCEPTED AS "CHURCH TRUTH" THESE THREE VERSES WOULD INSTANTLY

S. D. ("Quiet Talks") Gordon Examines Matthew 24

S. D. ("Quiet Talks") Gordon comments interestingly on the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew on pages 40-45 of his book, "Quiet Talks About Our Lord's Return", as follows:

Let us keep in mind that this is our Lord's answer to the questions about His coming, the full-end of the age, and the destruction of Jerusalem, which in their (the disciples') minds was connected with His coming.

The Olivet Talk, in Matthew's account of it, may be easily grouped under three general headings, after the introductory bit out of which it all grew.

The first of these may be called the **tribulation** group of paragraphs. It runs from verses four to forty-four of chapter twenty-four. In it our Lord speaks of a time of great distress or tribulation coming to the whole earth. This is the uppermost thought through the whole section. This is apt to come as a distinct surprise to one who is listening for something about His coming again. Yet this is the first thing He speaks of in answering the questions about when He will come.

There are five distinct paragraphs in this tribulation section.

The first paragraph runs through verses four to eight. It cautions against evil men coming under the pretence of being Christ, and gives the general characteristics of the tribulation in its beginnings as wars, rumors of wars, famines, and earthquakes.

The second paragraph runs through verses nine to fourteen inclusive. It tells of great tribulation coming to the Lord's followers. It helps here to remember who these disciples are representatively,--not the Jewish nation but the Church. The Church will suffer during this awful time of persecution, and some will be killed. As a result of the terrible persecution there will be a great testing and sifting. Many will "stumble", that is, give up their faith; false religious teachers will add to the confusion; and the love of many true Christians will grow cold. These are the general characteristics of the time for the Christian people. Then our Lord gives a clue to determining when the end of all will come,--it will not be until the Gospel of the Kingdom has been preached in all the world as a testimony unto all nations.

The third paragraph runs through verses fifteen to twenty-eight. It gives the **opening event** of this tribulation time, by which its beginning may be surely recognized. Jesus makes a quotation from Daniel, referring to something or someone called "the abomination of desolation"; when this is seen standing in the holy place of the temple in Jerusalem, that will indicate the beginning of this great tribulation. And our Lord significantly adds "let him that reads understand". This event will be followed by a time of awful happenings. The tribulation will be such as has never been known, and never will be again. It will be a time of such terrible experience for Christ's own followers that for their sakes it is mercifully shortened....

The fourth paragraph is a brief one but brings us to the central event we are thinking of. It runs through verses twenty-nine to thirty-one, and fixes the **closing event** of the tribulation time. There will be disturbances in the heavenly bodies, the sun, moon, and stars, and "the powers of the heavens (i.e., powers of physical attraction and cohesion) shall be shaken". Then will appear the **sign** of the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. His appearance will cause mourning among all the tribes of the earth. The word translated "mourning" has in it the thought of grief. And that suggests a sorrow and penitence among men when they see and recognize the Lord Jesus in His glory. Then he sends His angels with the great sound of a trumpet, and the redeemed will be caught up into His presence from every corner of the earth.

The fifth paragraph runs through verses thirty-two to forty-four, and mingles earnest pleadings to faithfulness with additional information. The budding of the fig tree was a certain sign to them of the coming of summer, so these occurrences will be the sure indication not only of His coming but that He is near. Then comes the prophetic utterance about the preservation of the Jewish race until all these things shall take place. Then an assurance of the absolute certainty of these events occurring; but the secrecy of the time from all, save the Father. The people of the earth will be as unprepared and as completely taken by surprise as were the people in the days of Noah. The separation of some being caught up, and the rest being left on the earth, would come as they were busy about their common duties, utterly unexpectant of anything unusual likely to occur just then. Then is the earnest plea to live so as to be always ready for His coming however unexpected it may be when it actually occurs....

It is interesting to note that the line of division between the Jew, the nations, and Christ's followers, is distinctly drawn in this Olivet Talk.

The Jews are referred to in the third person, as "this people", Luke 21:23, as "they", Luke 21:24, and as "this race", Matt. 24:34; Mark 13:30; Luke 21:32.

The nations or people of the earth generally, as distinct from Jew and from the group of Christ's followers, are referred to, likewise, in the third person, as "Gentiles".

Christ's followers are spoken to, the second person being used. The persecution which they suffer is "for My Name's sake". Matt. 24:9; Mark 13:13; Luke 21:12. To them is promised special wisdom in need, Mark 13:11; it is they who are urged to be watchful against the evil, and for His return. Indeed the whole talk is addressed to the circle of Christ's own people, later called the Church.

Here then may be put into a few sentences the teaching of Matthew, from our Lord's own lips regarding His return. It is to be preceded by a time of tribulation, which will be a terrible experience for all, and of sore testing and suffering for God's people. This will be introduced by an event in the Jewish world at Jerusalem, something or someone, called "the abomination of desolation", set up in the holy place in the temple at Jerusalem. And it will come to an end with an unsettling or shaking of the powers that hold the heavenly bodies in their places. Then our Lord Jesus Himself shall come openly to all, in great glory, and gather to Himself His own followers, leaving all others on the earth. His coming will find the world wholly unprepared.

Nathaniel West Examines Matthew 24

The following article by Nathaniel West, the only one I have been able to get so far, is appropriate here.

It is remarkable how plainly the 70th week dominates the structure of our Lord's Olivet Discourse from Matthew 24:15 to Matthew 25:40.

Warning against three snares--(1) that His Advent might be any moment, 24:4,5; (2) that it might be a secret one, 24:27; (3) that it might precede the close of the Tribulation, 24:29-31--He addresses the four apostles, Mark 13:3, as representatives of "The Twelve" and of the whole Church as a corporate unit, surviving till He comes (the "ye" and the "you" of the great commission) and answers the questions as to the "when" and the "what", the Time and the Sign of His Second Coming and of the End of the Age.

He first of all describes the painful and checkered "Times of the Gentiles", down to the "End", the interval between the 69th and 70th weeks, yet covering silently the 70th week itself, even to the "End", Matthew 24:4-14.

He then reverts to the middle of the 70th week, when the "Abomination" will "stand in a holy place", 24:15, and proceeds to describe the Great Tribulation, or last 1260 days of the Antichrist, 24:15-29. At the close comes His Parousia for His Saints, precisely as Daniel had pictured it. See Daniel 7:13, 25-27; 12:1-3. He calls it the "thief-time", 24:44, as John also does, placing the "Thief-time" after the 6th Vial, Revelation 16:15, which with the 7th closes the Tribulation at the last sound of the 7th Trumpet. Rev. 11:15-18.

He makes the Resurrection and the Rapture the first acts at His coming, the gathering of His elect by His angelic ministry, 24:30,40,41,44; 25:1.

He next pictures the judgment of the living Gentiles, 25:31-46, gathered as they will be, at Jerusalem, in their last conflict with Israel. His throne of glory overhanging Olivet in front of the city, the nations separated right and left, converted Israel holding the city delivered by His hand. In that Judgment the Antichrist is destroyed.

He points to New-Born Israel, the nearest His throne, and calls them "these My brethren", 25:40--Daniel's "people of the saints". Daniel 7:27.

He makes their deliverance immediately subsequent to the Rapture of the Church, this occurring at 24:30,31,40,41; 25:1; that at 25:40; and, like Daniel, crowns the whole scene with the destruction of the wicked, the salvation of the righteous, and the "Kingdom" of the "life everlasting", Matthew 25:34-46; Daniel 12:1-3,13.

From first to last the book of Daniel is His guide. He simply puts together the events in the Ends of Daniel's book, chapters 2, 7, 9, 11, and all of 12, the events of the 70th week, and assigning the church to her place, "ye" and "you" in the same perspective, adding parables and admonitions, concludes His answer to the questions proposed.

He separates Jerusalem's destruction, Daniel 9:26, from His Parousia, Daniel 7:13, by the interval of the "Unto the End", Daniel 9:26, or "Times of the Gentiles", Luke 21:24. He identifies His second coming with the "End of the Age", the end of Gentile times, the end of the 70th week. In Heb. 11:35,39,40, Paul declares that Israel's resurrection and ours occur at the same point of time, and are one.

It is needless to say that the apostles followed their Master's teaching, and took His Olivet discourse as the text-book of their eschatology. It ruled the whole faith of the early church. It settled every heresy as to the time of the advent. It corrected the Thessalonian error as to the "any moment view". Paul appeals to it to decide the question. He calls it the "Word of the Lord". He had it on the table when he wrote both letters to the Thessalonians. He uses its very language. The 70th week covers his own words in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-8. John reproduces it in full, in its two halves of twice 1,260, and gives its middle point as that of the slaughter of the "Two Witnesses" in Jerusalem, by the Antichrist during the time of the building of their temple in unbelief, Rev:11:2,3,7. He repeats the last 1,260 days again, in Revelation 12:6,14; 13:5; and gives their end-point in 11:15-19; 14:13-20; 19:11-21.⁶ Every prophecy of the Testament, and every representation of the time-point of the second coming of Christ for His saints, is dominated and determined by the jurisdiction of the Interval and the 70 weeks. This is absolutely conclusive

6 Many Pre-Tribulation-Rapturists, among them Dr. Gaebelien, as we have seen in the quotation on page 100 from his book "The Gospel of Matthew", hold the view here presented by Dr. West, viz., that the entire seventieth "week" of Daniel's prophecy is included in chapters six to nineteen of The Revelation. In a later article, "The Duration of the Tribulation", I shall endeavor to show that only the second half of that "week" is dealt with in those chapters. Whichever view is held on this point does not affect the main subject of Pre-Tribulation-Rapture versus Post-Tribulation-Rapture, as is evident from the fact that Dr. West, an ardent Post-Tribulation-Rapturist, and Dr. Gaebelien, a pronounced Pre-Tribulation-Rapturist, both hold it. I shall take the matter up in the chapter mentioned only in an attempt to simplify The Revelation.

against all the vain time-reckonings and the groundless inventions of men of modern times unskilled in the "sure word of prophecy".

The doctrine of the Seventy Weeks provides for us the only data in connection with the "Signs of the Times", as foretold by our Lord, for any approximate determination of the nearness of the advent. How much of the interval between the 69th and 70th weeks remains to run is known only to God. When the Antichrist and the Jews are in "covenant" at the beginning of the 70th week, and clearer still, when the breach occurs between them at the "middle of the week", then the determination of the year, perhaps the month, but never of the "day or hour",⁷ will be certain, to all believers. To watch always and wait patiently is the believer's privilege.

Prophetic nearness is one thing, **chronological nearness** is another, and yet faith and hope overlap all intervening events. The relatively brief remainder of the Interval, and the Antichrist, are what is immediately before us, and with all sobriety we can say that it is this that lends an interest, so solemn and absorbing, to the attitude of the nations, the extension of missions, the Jewish movements, the Eastern Question, the crimes of Christendom, and the current events in both hemispheres of the world.

An Improbable Idea

Edmund Shackleton says:

The idea is improbable, that an infinitely wise God should have entrusted to such fallible creatures as we are the task of apportioning the New Testament Scriptures between Christians and Jews. I do not, of course, refer to those passages which obviously speak of Israel.

As a matter of fact, the adherents of this theory differ among themselves as to the right way to apply it. Some take certain passages of a book as Jewish and retain the rest as meant for Christians; whilst others, with more consistency, excise the whole book.

No part of the New Testament seems safe from their pruning-knife. The Apocalypse even, guarded as it is by the promise of blessing to the reader, as well as by the solemn warning at its close to anyone who adds to or takes from its contents, has not escaped. The whole book has, by one writer at least, been Judaized,⁸ and all this school are in the habit of dealing thus with the portion between the third and twentieth chapters.

The first three Gospels, the Acts, and all the Epistles, save the Pauline, have frequently been thus assailed. As Paul is said to be the revealer of the Secret Rapture, his writings have been spared by most, but not by all.

The epistle to the Hebrews seems the one most obnoxious, and it has been recently asserted that it is for the Millennium. This is a singular notion; for the coming of Christ is frequently mentioned throughout this epistle as still in the future, and is held up as an incentive for faithfulness to Christ.

7 But may it not be that so accurate are Biblical "times" and "seasons", Acts 1:7, that the coming of Christ will occur exactly seven Roman years, of 360 days each, to the very hour, from the time that Antichrist shall "confirm the covenant" with the Jews? Hence may it not be possible for us to know both the day and the hour of Christ's return, counting from the time of the confirming of that covenant? Was not such a foreknowledge typified by the final seven days' notice which the Lord gave Noah to enable him to finish his work and enter the ark before the flood came? For more on this subject, see "How Long Was Noah In The Ark?", in this volume, and "The Thief-like Coming" in a later volume.

8 E. W. Bullinger, an examination of portions of whose book, "The Apocalypse", or, "The Day of the Lord", will be found among the chapters on "At the Last Trump" and in "The 'Suntelia' and 'Telos' Argument: A Reply to Rev. E. W. Bullinger", in later volumes.

Much more might be said, but this is sufficient to justify me in entirely discarding the Judaizing system in this enquiry. Pages 9,10, "Will the Church Escape the Great Tribulation?"

A QUARTET OF FALSE DOCTRINES

Among the many "damnable heresies" which, as Peter predicted, 2 Peter 2:1, would be introduced into the Church by "false teachers" (some of them none the less false teachers in these matters, and so dupes of the devil, because in other matters they were, undoubtedly, true teachers and so gospelors of God) are these four: Origenism, Post-Millennialism, Modernism, and Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism.

In order to show that the last of this quartet is just as much a "damnable heresy" as are the others, I shall now briefly examine the first three of these false doctrines--recognized and branded as such by all Pre-Tribulation-Rapturists--and compare them with the fourth, Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism, in order to show the distinct family resemblance between them.

Origenism and Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism

Great as the difference seems to be, at first sight, between Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism and the so-called "spiritualizing" of the Scriptures, sometimes called "The Allegorical Mode of Interpreting Scripture", there really is close kinship between them.

Concerning the so-called "spiritualizing" of the Scriptures, Mr. Shackleton says:

The departing from the literal mode of understanding the language of inspiration has been the source of immeasurable evil to the cause of the truth. It was by means of the allegorizing of Scripture that the Church drifted into the darkness of Popery, so that even the Pre-Millennial advent, that bright hope of the Church, became lost to view. In proof of this I shall quote from two well-known Christian historians. The first is Mosheim, who is an unbiased witness, being himself an allegorist. Writing of Origen, who, in the third century, first brought into vogue this allegorical system of interpretation, he says:

"The Christian doctors, who had applied themselves to the study of letters and philosophy, soon abandoned the frequented paths, and struck out into the devious wilds of fancy. Origen was at the head of this speculative tribe." And again: "He maintained that the Holy Scriptures were to be interpreted in the same allegorical manner that the Platonists explained the history of their gods....In this devious path he displays the most ingenious strokes of fancy, though always at the expense of Truth, whose divine simplicity is scarcely discernible through the cobweb veil of allegory. Long before his day an opinion had prevailed that Christ was to come and reign a thousand years among men before the entire and final dissolution of the world. This opinion had hitherto met with no opposition; but in this century its credit began to decline, principally through the influence and authority of Origen, who opposed it with the greatest warmth, because it was incompatible with some of his favorite sentiments."

Milner writes: "No man, not altogether unsound and hypocritical, ever injured the Church of Christ as Origen did. From the fanciful mode of allegory introduced by him, and uncontrolled by Scriptural rule and order, arose a vitiated method of commenting on the sacred pages....A thick mist for ages pervaded the Christian world, supported and strengthened by his absurd allegorical manner of interpretation. The learned alone were considered as guides implicitly to be trusted; and the vulgar, when the literal sense was hissed off the stage, had nothing to do but to follow their authority wherever it might conduct them."

In the writings of this school no unanimity is to be found. The cause of this is

evident. If the language of Scripture is not taken in its obvious and natural sense, who is to determine what degree of looseness of interpretation is permissible? From these and many other considerations, I conclude that the allegorical mode of interpreting prophecy has been proved to be an evil tree, on the principle that a tree is known by its fruits. The same may be said of the inferential method of the Secret Rapture school. Pages 11-13, "Will the Church Escape the Great Tribulation?"

Just as Origen's pernicious allegorizing of the Scriptures has caused many of the teachers of the Church to "abandon the frequented paths and strike out into the devious wilds of fancy", "always at the expense of Truth" and the hiding of her "divine simplicity" under "the cobweb veil of allegory", so has done Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism with its "inferential method" (of which more later).⁹

Origen's system of interpretation has resulted in the splitting up of the Church into almost innumerable "schools"; and naturally and necessarily so, for contrary to the statement of Peter that "no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation", 2 Peter 1:20, it has made all Scripture to be of "private interpretation"; for where all is guesswork, one man has as much right to guess as another.

Darby's system of interpretation has had precisely the same effect upon Pre-Millennialism, for it has divided the adherents of this blessed truth into two main companies, Post-Tribulation-Rapturists and Pre-Tribulation-Rapturists, and has subdivided the latter into so many different "schools" that it is practically impossible to keep track of them all. And why not? If John Darby, following the lead of the Irvingite woman, had the right to throw into the Jewish Wastepaper Basket all Scriptures that he could not reconcile with **his** pet theory, then all others had the same right to place in that convenient receptacle all Scriptures that they could not fit in with **their** pet theories. For this reason, I make a similar charge against Darby to that which Milner made against Origen, as quoted above:

No man, not altogether unsound and hypocritical, ever injured the cause of Pre-Millennialism as Darby did. From the Jewish Wastepaper Basket mode of "dividing the Word of Truth" introduced by him, and uncontrolled by Scriptural rule and order, arose a vitiated method of commenting on the sacred pages....A thick mist for a hundred years has pervaded the Pre-Millennial world, supported and strengthened by his absurd "Jewish Wastepaper Basket" manner of interpretation. The learned (in this "inferential method" of "dividing the Word of Truth") alone are considered as guides implicitly to be trusted; and the vulgar, since Post-Tribulation-Rapturism was hissed off the stage, have had nothing to do but to follow their authority wherever it might conduct them.

Another writer says still more forcibly,

"If it be once admitted that the apostles did not receive instructions from the Lord as Christians for Christians, the foundations of Christian truth are gone."

9 See "Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism Merely Inferential".

Modernism and Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism

That this warning is timely, the progress made by "Modernism" proves; and this very modern so-called "rightly dividing the Word of Truth", this casting into the Jewish Wastepaper Basket of many Biblical truths, is akin to and has helped encourage the latter-day "great delusion" of "Modernism". In fact, it is a part of it; for Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism handles some portions of the prophetic Scriptures almost as sacrilegiously as Modernism handles other portions.

The Modernists admit that "the Virgin Birth" is taught in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, but say it is taught there because Matthew and Luke were Jews who held the Jewish tradition, mistakenly based upon Isaiah 7:14, of a virgin-born Messiah, therefore declared, of course mistakenly, that Jesus was so born. You cannot find the virgin birth in the epistles of Paul, they say, hence it is not true, or Paul, a much more intelligent man, would have mentioned it.¹⁰

The Pre-Tribulation-Rapturists admit that the coming of the Lord for His "elect" "immediately after the Tribulation" is taught in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, but say that it is not taught in the epistles of Paul; therefore, they say, if the disciples of any period supposed that the coming of Christ for "His elect" after the Tribulation meant Christ's coming for His Church, they were mistaken: for Paul shows that that "stage" of the Lord's coming is to take place before the Tribulation.¹¹ Even the casual reader can immediately detect the similarity of

¹⁰ As to this: In the only place in which Paul mentions the birth of Jesus, Galatians 4:4, he is careful to say that He was "MADE of a woman", not "BORN of a woman"; which phrase is used when the birth of a child begotten of a man is meant. See Job 14:1; 15:14; 25:4; Matthew 11:11. In Galatians 4:4, Paul uses not the Greek word "gennao"--"to beget" or "bring forth", and which is properly rendered either "born" or "begotten", but "ginomai"--"to become" or "to begin to be"; which word, so far as I know, is never rendered "born", and is in many places used to signify a miraculous or Divine work. See Matthew 4:3; John 1:3,10,14; 2:9; 5:4,6,9,14. In other places, where human birth is meant, Paul uses the word "gennao", or "born"; as, for instance, in Acts 22:3,28 when speaking of his own birth, and in Romans 9:11 when speaking of the births of Esau and Jacob; and again in Galatians 4:23,29 when speaking of the births of Ishmael and Isaac. So his change from the word "gennao", used in Galatians 4:23,29 to denote that Ishmael and Isaac were "born", i.e., of a man and a woman, to the word "ginomai" in the same chapter, to denote that Jesus was "made", i.e., of a woman only, seems to be a clear endorsement of the doctrine of the Virgin Birth.

¹¹ As to this: The coming, or "Parousia" of Christ "immediately after the Tribulation", was the only coming known to the Church for the first eighteen hundred years of her history, as is evidenced by the fact that although the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ was dealt with exhaustively by many Christian writers during those eighteen centuries, there can be found no trace in their writings of an alleged "first stage" of Christ's Second Coming; or what I am here calling Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism. Since they cannot deny this fact, some Pre-Tribulation-Rapture writers, in order, if possible, to avoid its fatal force, declare that the absence of any mention of Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism in these Church writings is due to the (alleged) fact that immediately after the death of Paul the Church FORGOT this part of his teaching; hence it was never mentioned later, until after it had been re-revealed about a hundred years so. Such an explanation (?) is an insult both to the Holy Spirit, the Teacher of the Church, and to human intelligence, and shows to what almost blasphemous lengths some of these people will go in order to defend their doctrine. Of all the teachings of Paul, why should this alleged doctrine of his have been forgotten by his friends and followers? And having once learned it, how could they have forgotten it seeing that they possessed copies of his epistles in which, allegedly, it is clearly taught? It is true that during "The Dark Ages", 500 A.D. to 1500 A.D., the professed church lost or forgot practically all "sound doctrine". But that left almost five hundred years, and those years the nearest to the apostolic period, for men who had

reasoning.

The "wisdom" of "that old serpent, the devil" is revealed in no better way than in the way in which he enlarged the scope of Modernism by introducing it in the guise of Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism.

Knowing full well that he would be unable to get Modernism into genuine evangelical circles unless it was disguised very cleverly, Satan undertook to deceive, and succeeded in deceiving, such staunch evangelicals as Darby, Scofield, Gaebelein, et al, into accepting Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism, and then induced these men to handle all Scriptures bearing upon the Rapture of the Church in much the same way that the Modernists handle other Scriptures; that is to say, by casting into the Jewish Wastepaper Basket all Scriptures which oppose their doctrine, as the Modernists cast out all Scriptures which they do not want, and by interpreting all the rest of these Scriptures in such a way as to force them to fit what they want to teach, precisely as the Modernists do with such Scriptures as they accept.

Thus tens of thousands who perhaps would not listen to a sermon or read an article by such Modernists as Shailer Matthews or Harry Emerson Fosdick, will eagerly swallow this disguised Modernism and smack their lips over it when it is presented by A Torrey, a Gray, a Scofield, or a Gaebelein on this side of the ocean, or by a Panton, a Marsh, or a Sir Robert Anderson on the other side. And because it has the strong endorsement of such great men, many thousands of evangelists and ministers, who do not know its true character, present it from hundreds of evangelical platforms, and a multitude of professedly evangelical publishing houses turn out multiplied millions of copies of tracts, papers, and books containing it. And these same evangelicals will anathematize and excommunicate those other evangelicals whose eyes have been opened to see the delusion and so will have none of it. "An angel of light"? Yes, Satan can and often does appear as such. "Wise as a serpent"? Yea, verily! Satan is just that.

Post-Millennialism and Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism

Until the early part of the third century A.D., when Origen introduced his "allegorical" and "spiritual" method of interpreting the Scriptures, the doctrine of the Second, Personal, Pre-Millennial Coming of Christ was universally held by the Church. Origenism reduced that coming to a mere allegorical or spiritual coming, which idea many accepted and some still hold. However, without exception, all those who continued to believe in the literal return of the Lord continued also to believe that it would be Pre-Millennial.

But a little more than two hundred years ago, Dr. Daniel Whitby (1638-1726), who, like Origen, was a Unitarian--Whitby having been first a Calvinist, then an Arminian, but later becoming an Arian or Unitarian--introduced his "New Hypothesis" or "New Discovery", which we now know as "Post-Millennialism", or the doctrine that the Lord will not return to the earth until after the Millennium.

not lost "sound doctrine" to write on every aspect of the Lord's Coming, and these men did write, voluminously, on this subject, yet not one of them even hints at the doctrine of the Rapture of the Church before the Tribulation. And it is significant that at the Reformation, when the Dark Ages came to an end and men again began to give much thought to the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ, not one of them, so far as is known, ever gave a hint of an alleged "first stage" of that Coming; until John Darby, about 1830, obtained the idea from the alleged "Spirit message" given by the Irvingite woman, as related in "The Origin of Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism".

Now I will show some of the resemblances between those two alleged "new discoveries", Post-Millennialism and Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism.

1. **About 200 years ago** Daniel Whitby introduced his "New Discovery", Post-Millennialism, which "grew out of the fact that Protestantism was a great improvement on the Catholicism of the Dark Ages; and as the world seemed to be growing better as a result of the Reformation, it was assumed by Dr. Daniel Whitby and Dr. Daniel Brown that it would continue to improve until the end of the age, when the Millennium would be ushered in and Christ would return at the close of the thousand years".

About 100 years ago John Darby introduced his "New Discovery", which I am now calling "Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism", which grew out of the alleged "Spirit message" of the Irvingite woman, as related in "The Origin of Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism".

2. Dr. Whitby and many of his associates, such as Mosheim, Russell, Burton, and Shield, testify that the Pre-Millennial doctrine was universal for the first three hundred years of Church history. It is also indisputable that for over sixteen hundred years of that history, wherever the doctrine of the literal coming of the Lord was taught, it was declared to be Pre-Millennial.

All well-informed Pre-Tribulation-Rapturists are compelled to admit that for the first three hundred years of Church history, the Post-Tribulation-Rapture doctrine was universally held. It is also indisputable that for eighteen hundred years of that history, wherever a literal Rapture of the Church was taught, it was declared to be Post-Tribulation.

3. When Daniel Whitby introduced his new doctrine of Post-Millennialism, it quickly became so popular as almost to destroy the old truth of Pre-Millennialism. So much so that even in my own youth, 1863-1883, a Pre-Millennialist was, comparatively speaking, a "rara avis".

When John Darby introduced the new doctrine of Pre-Tribulation-Rapturism, it quickly became so popular as almost to destroy the old truth of Post-Tribulation-Rapturism. So much so that not until several years after I had learned this old truth, by an independent reading of the New Testament, did I meet anyone who held it--that first one being Dr. Nathaniel West, an ex-Pre-Tribulation-Rapturist, of whom mention has already been made in this volume.

4. In spite of the unpopularity of their position, (how unpopular it was I learned to my cost upon more than one occasion), a few men continued to walk in "the old path" of Pre-Millennialism. Gradually others joined them, constrained to do so by an honest investigation of its claims. Later, many others entered upon that "old path", compelled to do so by "the inexorable logic of facts", the so-called "World War" having convinced them that Post-Millennialism was false.

In spite of the unpopularity of their position (how unpopular it was, and is, none know better than myself), a few men, such as S. P. Tregelles, Charles H. Spurgeon, and George Muller--each one a giant in the Christian world--continued to walk in "the old path" of Post-Tribulation-Rapturism. Others joined them (I have mentioned a few of these men), constrained to do so by an honest investigation of its claims. And we are expecting that in the not distant future many more will enter upon this "old path", forced to do so by "the inexorable logic of facts"--the facts of fulfilling prophecy. Already some Pre-Tribulation-Rapture writers and speakers are expressing surprise that the Rapture of the Church has been so long delayed, for they are now seeing some prophecies being fulfilled which a few years

ago they were declaring would not be fulfilled until after the Church had been caught away. As time passes, they will have still more occasion for surprise, for the Tribulation itself will burst upon them, and then, if they shall not have done so before, they will be compelled to admit that Pre-Tribulation-Rapture, which will then have died, was a delusion of the devil.

5. Post-Millennialism has its root in the **pride** of man, for it is planted in the ground of man's belief that the world can and will be won to Christ by the efforts of man during the absence of Christ.

Pre-Tribulation-Rapture has its root in the **fear** of man, for it is planted in the ground of man's natural desire to avoid the painful.

Tertullian maintained: "Whatever is first is true; whatever is last is adulterate."

Faber says: "If a doctrine totally unknown to the primitive Church, which received her theology immediately from the hands of the disciples of the apostles, springs up in a subsequent age, such doctrine stands on its very front with the brand of human invention."

These statements have been used by Pre-Tribulation-Rapturists against Post-Millennialism. They are equally true when used by us against Pre-Tribulation-Rapture; for this doctrine, like Post-Millennialism, is "new", decidedly "new", being only a century old, and it was "**totally unknown to the primitive Church**".¹²

¹² In the use of wrested Scripture with which these respective doctrines are supported (?), there is also a strong resemblance between Christian Science and Pre-Tribulation-Rapture; and as Christian Science, with its practical denial of the need of the Atonement, jeopardizes the salvation of its adherents, so likewise, later, when the adherents of Pre-Tribulation-Rapture shall find themselves plunged unprepared, and perhaps despairing, into the Tribulation, the possibility will be great that many of them will be included with those of whom Jesus said, "Because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold." Matt. 24:12.