

No.
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"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD." COL. 3. 1.

THE CHURCH AND THE TRIBULATION

WITH THOUGHTS ON THE

GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.

An Address (revised) at

65, St. Mary Axe. E. C.

7th August, 1914.

by

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1. What is the Church?
2. What is the Tribulation?
3. What is the Gospel?
4. What is the Kingdom?
5. The Wonderfulness of God's love to the Lost.
6. Questions prayerfully considered in the
Light of Scripture.

I take it beloved friends, that we start from the standpoint of acknowledging the Lord, not simply acknowledging Him as Saviour, but as Lord. To us Scripture is the Word of God, being applied by the Holy Spirit to our hearts and consciences as such. Contradictions are not to be found there. Truth is truth, and we honour, value, and love the whole of our precious Bible. If anything is popular, but not in the Scripture, we hate it, however many hold it as part of their creed. If anything is unpopular, but in the Scripture, we want to love it though many spurn and despise that which God has declared. Moreover, while we have the lamp that shineth in a dark place, we look forward to the time when the day shall dawn and the Light Bringer arise. We watch for our Saviour, and though there may be among us errors of interpretation as to

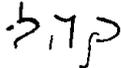
the order of prophetic events, I trust we have not only the primary unity in Christ, but the further unity of looking for Christ with heart-longing. Argument, wordy argument, with those who differ as to prophetic study and who have not spiritual affection for the Lord's Coming, is a waste of time. But when there is first that spiritual unity of affection for Christ which longs to see Him, then it is becoming that children of God should, with quietness of manner, and with prayerful dependence, seek to find out what God has REVEALED as to the order of events. The secret things belong to the Lord our God, in this sense as well as in the sense in which Deuteronomy uses the words. We can add, the things that are revealed belong to us, and belong to us that we may "do". God has given us Scripture with a purpose, and I hope we can say that it is our longing to be led of the Spirit of God along the path of obedience which leads INTO all the Truth. Therefore without any quarreling and without the attitude of proud contempt, we desire to approach Scripture, not that we may seek to erect our differences against one another, but that these may be thrown down, and every high thought brought into subjection to the obedience of Christ.

What is the Church? I take it, beloved friends, that gathered, as we are, in the Lord's mercy, this evening, our hearts are clear the term "church" does not mean a building of stone, or brick, nor does it signify a national organisation, but the word is used in Scripture for little companies of the redeemed carrying out the Lord's will in different towns, AND the same word is used for an aggregate of certain saints who are called THE CHURCH. At present we are not concerned as to the little companies in different

towns. (I should rather put it, at present our subject is not concerned with these little companies, - I hope we are always concerned with regard to them, longing to see such established by grace, for with God all things are possible). Our subject relates to the aggregate, the complete company. What is the church? Does it comprehend all the saints of all dispensations, or the saints of the present dispensation, or some of the saints of the present dispensation or is there a fourth alternative? The first declaration of our beloved Lord to which our minds and hearts, are attracted is in Matthew 16 (Matthew, be it noticed, is the only Gospel which mentions the church). In the 18th verse we read, "And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, (a stone) and on this Rock (Christ Himself) I will build as a house My Church and gates of Hades shall not have strength against it", strength to hold it down. Here then we have brought before us that Christ speaks of His church. At once we begin to feel, - Are there various churches in the "aggregate" sense? Is there a difference between "My church" "The church which is His³ Body" and the expression "Church of God"? Now every Scripture term that is distinct must have a distinct aspect, but distinct aspect is not always distinct existence. Jesus is Christ, but there is a special meaning when we have one name and when we have another, and a still different stress when we read "Jesus Christ", and yet a fourth aspect when we find the order "Christ Jesus". I do not mean that any one of us can say, I have explored all these points. We know very little of them, but reverence for God

compels us to acknowledge there is not a single occurrence in Scripture of any name where another could be used with equal propriety. Not is there a single case where the words could be altered one iota without damaging the passage. "As for God, His way is perfect". "The words of the Lord are pure words.... purified seven times" - there is no dross. I take it, therefore that ^asubject like this needs very definite, prayerful, careful, heart-searching study. I will express what I believe~~s~~ is in accord with the mind of God briefly, and say it seems to me that the "My church" of Matthew 16 is the church which is Christ's body, of Ephesians and Colossians; that the expression "church" in 1 Corinthians 12. 28 brings out a similar thought; that the term "church of God" is commonly used for a local expression of this larger aggregate. The Lord here states "Upon this Rock I will build My church". We read oftentimes of events which are sure, as if in the past, when they are actually future. The tenses of Scripture are a very precious study, and though it would be possible to use a future tense with a past force in certain contexts, yet unless we have evidence to the contrary the child-like disciple infers from the Divine language that the church~~was~~ was not commenced when Christ spoke these ^{words.} things. The church was future. If this be not so, the burden of proof otherwise, that is, Scriptural proof, is upon those who deny what appears to be the evident meaning of Christ's words. I take it that Scripture is written for disciples, and one of the greatest dangers we have is that we

are too clever for the Scripture. We know so much that we know very little. If we could only come to God's book with an absolutely open heart, we should go away with an absolutely full heart; and an overflowing heart. "The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way". We often have so many theories and beliefs that we have not room for another grain of Truth. Oh that there may be a holy receptiveness, though it is well to combine the open heart toward God, with the closed heart toward human imaginations and the open mouth toward poor lost sinners. This passage seems to link the building of the church with Christ's resurrection. We find in the Book of Acts that when the Day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place, and that the Holy Spirit came down. 1 Corinthians 12 declares that by one Spirit the believers addressed were all baptised into one body. I take it therefore that these words, and others, concerning the Spirit imply that there could not have been the one body till the Day of Pentecost, but the church is His body. Pentecost, associated with the new meal offering of the type, (mark the word "new") - Pentecost dates from the resurrection morning and thus everything combines to suggest the birthday of the church was the day of Pentecost. The word "ecclesia" Divinely used, signifies a called-out-company. The term "called-out" involves the thought of separation from the world, but it further suggests a Divine summoning of those called out for a purpose, called out by

One Who has a right to call. Indeed, the word is a Grecian legal word for the official gathering of the free-man of a city, and those who are the freemen of the heavenly city in Acts 2 are regarded as the church. But we must not forget the association with the Hebrew word "  " which is again and again rendered "congregation". The congregation of Israel was a type of the church. Hence we read in Acts 7 of the church in the wilderness. Some ^{have} ~~of~~ taken this usage as an argument for the widening of the term "church" in the present dispensation. If I mistake not, their viewpoint would almost compel a widening of words regarding salvation which are used of the Lord Jesus, because those words are used of the types, (for example Jude 5). The truly reverent position is to say, "The terms used of the types are realised in the Anti-type, and in like manner Israel's brought out company with a wondrous unity and a manifest earthly centre was a type of the church". At once the difficulty suggests itself, To what extent does that type contain parallels, and to what extent has it contrasts? Types are most difficult to handle unless the Holy Spirit has made clear the Lord's teaching. I was met by one this week who said to me, "Has it ever been suggested to you that the Cherubim are evil spirits? That God compelled them to block the entrance into Eden, and that they were put in the Holiest of all, made to look on to the blood though they did not like it, they were made to see the Triumph of Christ?" I said -

that it seemed to me that such an interpretation was quite out of harmony with Scripture, but that the point which settled the question was "The veil, that is to say, His flesh". We know how that wondrous and glorious veil is marked out by THE HOLY SPIRIT as a picture, a type of the flesh of our beloved Lord, but we read in Exodus 26 that this veil was made with cherubim. Now this seems to me a wondrous illustration of how the Holy Spirit settles a point. Hebrews 10 shatters any theory that the cherubim could have pictured evil, because there was no evil in the flesh of the Lord Jesus but unless the Holy Spirit gives us a key to a type we have to be very careful, lest we are forcing a parallel where He intends a contrast, inasmuch as every type falls short. Personally, I believe that the unity of Israel was a type of the unity of the church even as the bringing out of Egypt was a type. I go a step further and suggest that the earthly unity was deeply important, - but there are many who bear the precious Name of the Lord Jesus and who have carefully studied the Scriptures who are inclined to use the word "church" with respect to the saints who have fallen asleep. If I mistake not the expressions "church militant" and "Church triumphant" are totally out of place at the present time, - that the Holy Spirit formed the church on the Day of Pentecost and that when children of God fell asleep they were not viewed in the same aspect as being in that church. They were

still of the family, being children of God in heaven and earth. The saints who have fallen asleep, and those who are living, were and are, thus linked, but the term "Church" for the most part suggests the visible executive of Christ on the earth, just as the assembly of Israel was God's manifest centre on earth. It is impossible to work out all these points now. I can only start lines of thought with the hope that the Lord's people present will either bring forward some Scripture which they think controverts them, at the end of the meeting, or if unable to do so, that they will follow out ALL the Scriptures till they come to a conclusion well pleasing unto the Lord. The term "Church" in general seems to be used with regard to an earthly executive representing the Lord in the glory. Secondly, the church was ever changing in this aspect. I do not doubt that in one sense a believer built into the church is in a building which groweth into a holy temple in the Lord, and that in this heavenly aspect of the church there is a continuance of the Divine work, but that is hardly the aspect which has repeated prominence in Scripture. This aspect is that, shall I say, of a Divine citadel on earth, to be a contrast with the world. Ephesians 5 brings before us the company of the redeemed under the figure of the Bride, and the Body. These two figures are distinct, though beautifully related. In the future our beloved Lord will present to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. He loved the church, and gave Himself for

Abraham was not in the kingdom of Heaven, he SHALL be, according to the promise of Matthew's Gospel, for it is said that he will be seen there. In like manner though he was not in the church, because the church was not then formed on earth, I believe that in resurrection glory, when there is the visible church, presented to Christ Himself as a glorious church, Scripture shows Abraham will be part of it. The Lord's people as a whole seem thus united, and Matthew 16 appears to promise this where it adds, "The gates of Hades shall not have strength to hold it down". The old time saints used to go to Hades. When Christ died and rose again they were removed from Hades. There is a suggestiveness in the wording in the light of Hebrews 2.

"In one Spirit were we all baptized into one body" is the Divine statement. The baptism in the Spirit was, if I mistake not, always visible. In Acts 2, in Acts 8, in Acts 10, in Acts 19 it was followed by manifest signs. - In the EARTHLY aspect therefore, can we be said to be the one body if we have not the baptism in the one Spirit which was into it? Do not the terms "baptism" and "body" imply something visible? And have we not a Divine suggestiveness in the fact that the later epistles distinctly OMIT the expressions "body", "bride", and "church"? Not that the heavenly aspect is changed, but that the earthly aspect which was so prominent when the Lord's people were united, is temporarily veiled, and therefore it becomes us to use the same caution in the use of these words. I cannot, beloved friends, find any

Scripture for saying that a believer who is living with a large measure of failure at the present time will have a higher position in the glory than Abraham. I can find evidence that those who are saved by grace are blessed WITH believing Abraham. I can find evidence that the Lord's people in the present dispensation are richly blessed individually, and collectively, but I cannot find the term "body" used with respect to the manifestation of Christ's work on earth when there is fixed disorder, when there is perpetuated confusion, (but, thanks be unto God, not perpetual confusion), and when sects and systems of men are brought to the front. The Acts, is, if I mistake not, the only CHURCH history. Parallel with the book of Joshua, it is followed by a parallel with the book of Judges. Ruin among men set in, and weakness remains. The Lord's plan is not frustrated, but as with Israel's temple of old, the Shekinah glory is awhile unseen. True the glory shall come again, and the Lord shall take up the threads of history, and there SHALL be presented to Himself a glorious church, but when we find believers at the present day declaring that they have been invisibly baptized into one body, and others who claim that they received certain supernatural gifts of speaking with tongues when they were baptized, we are compelled, with Scripture in front of us, to doubt both contentions, to say nothing of the Anglican claim in

confirmation". We are compelled to doubt these things, and to realise the failure which Scripture has marked out as the present state of affairs, yet to be conscious that our living Lord still lives, and that He will never fail in carrying out His work.

What is the tribulation? And this very briefly. The term "tribulation" comes in English from a word for a threshing instrument. We know in Isaiah of a sharp threshing instrument having teeth. Tribulation is in ONE sense the reverse to persecution. Persecution is pursuit to make a man RUN AWAY. Tribulation is that which comes down upon him to crush him. Both are needed by the Lord's people and both produce the manifestation of that which the Lord has placed within. The believer shows his LIFE by running when persecution comes, and he runs to the house of defence:- but he shows what he has IN him when tribulation comes, for it only rubs off the outer husks that the grain which the Lord has put there may be the more prepared for glory. Tribulation therefore is, by no means, a usual Scriptural parallel with wrath. In Matthew 13, 21 we read of tribulation arising because of the word. In John 16, 33, the Lord says, "In the world ye shall have tribulation". Acts 14, 22 - We must, through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. So in Romans 5. 3 and 8. 35 tribulation affects the saints. Indeed, throughout the later Scriptures far the larger number of passages concerning tribulation are concerning the test of the Lord's people. The exceptions are few. Romans 2. 9

is one, 2 Thes. 1 speaks of tribulation to those who trouble or tribulate you, and Revelation 2. 22 is the Divine answer to man's wickedness, where the Lord says to those in Thyatira, they shall be cast into great tribulation. But this same Book of Revelation couples tribulation with John in chapter 1, 9, and with the faithful angel of the church in Smyrna in chapter 2.

9. Let me repeat it, the majority of occurrences refer to the Lord's people. Consequently there is nothing in tribulation that would be unfitting for a child of God in the present dispensation. Tribulation is not wrath. Is THE GREAT TRIBULATION distinctly contrasted with tribulations, or is it the climax of them? Is there any Scripture which says the great tribulation is wrath? Matthew 24 brings before us a unique tribulation and so does Revelation 7. 14 where we have the exact words "The great tribulation". The saints who have come out from the great tribulation in Revelation 7 are viewed as a heavenly people. They are from all nations and are seen in HEAVEN when the remnant of Israel have been sealed on EARTH. This seems of the greatest importance. God resumes dealings with Israel in Revelation 7 in the first few verses and they are on earth, whereas those who are seen next in Revelation 7 are NOT ISRAEL, AND NOT ON EARTH. The scene is plainly heavenly, and includes evidently those who have been under the altar in the fifth seal of Revelation 6. It is deeply important to notice that Israel are not taken up in the Book of Revelation when the seals start. This is a most important point with regard to

the order of prophetic events. Israel are not taken up in the book of Revelation till the sixth seal. The great tribulation appears from Matthew 24 to be the climax of the present age leading up to the glorious coming of our beloved Lord.

What is the Gospel? The word signifies a message that is well, and well is it with our hearts when we have experienced this. There are many added terms with respect to the Gospel. The Gospel of the grace of God, the Gospel of the Kingdom, The Gospel of the Glory of Christ, the Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of God, the Gospel of peace, and so forth. Do these signify so many different Gospels? or so many aspects of THE Gospel? It is remarkable that the only one of the four narratives of Christ's life which mentions the church (Matthew) mentions more than once the Gospel of the Kingdom, Matthew 4. 23; 9. 35; and 24. 14. The Gospel of the Kingdom is not a gospel of works, there is nothing of human merit or natural works with regard to it. Our beloved Lord appointed a Gospel to be preached, He named it the Gospel of the Kingdom. In Matthew 13 we find the parables of the Kingdom. The first one begins with the Word of the Kingdom, and the saints in the present dispensation are viewed as the wheat, with the tares in their midst; and described as the hid treasure, and then as the one pearl. The saints are seen in the parables of the kingdom of heaven. Undoubtedly there are different aspects, but are there different Gospels? We read of the Gospel of the uncircumcision, the Gospel of the circumcision. Were these two Gospels? or two spheres of the

one Gospel? The context will give a very definite answer. Paul was most concerned it should be clear that there was but one Gospel, and that those who were Jews by birth were saved as the Gentiles and had no right to compel the Gentiles to judaize. Why? There is in the present time but one Gospel, the glorious Gospel of the grace of God.

What is the Kingdom? Though the term Kingdom may be used generally to describe God's oversight, (for His Kingdom ruleth over all), yet specially we think of the Kingdom with regard to that future time when the Lord shall reign on earth, before His ancients gloriously. Therefore we read, "Through much tribulation we must enter into the Kingdom of God," it is future. We are called into His Kingdom and glory, but is there no aspect of it now? Yes, Revelation 1 says, "The Kingdom and patience". Then it will be the Kingdom and glory, NOW the kingdom and patience. Why is this? The Lord Jesus came and presented Himself as King fulfilling part of Zech. 9. He was despised. His people, in accord with this, are still the world's outcasts. It was AFTER that event the Lord Jesus Christ said, "Now is the judgment of this world". A child of God has no right now to take any share in politics or conflict. The fact that Christ presented Himself as King, and did not receive the Kingdom means that the believer has no position in the world's government. I mean no RIGHTFUL position. That there are believers who take a share, I am sorrowfully convinced, but the Scripture holds good. "If we remain under, we shall reign with Him", and if believers do not

remain under, though they will be saved, they are not promised a share in the world-government when Christ reigns as King. It seems to me plain from Scripture that the sin of co-operating in the world's government, unless it is confessed before the Lord, must hinder from a prominent position in the Millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. This needs to be emphasized upon the Lord's people, especially in connection with the solemn crisis through which this nation and other nations are passing. The believer, though he is always expected to be law-abiding, can never forget the crowned rights of the Lord Jesus to the Kingdom of all the earth. He can never forget this authority. He must therefore be one who while He prays for kings and all that are in authority to-day and acknowledges God's governmental position of these things, yet realises how earth has been marked with the rejection of the Lord of Glory Himself. Among ourselves, we cannot allow this rejection to be approved. Among ourselves therefore we are to be, shall I say, a little kingdom? It is true, believers are not merely viewed as subjects. They are closely related to the King. The subjects of the King, even His citizens, sent a message after Him saying, "We will not have this Man to rule over us". But we, by anticipation of the future are already in the NEW covenant which will yet be made with Israel. We in like manner are in the Kingdom, the Kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. Now it is the kingdom and PATIENCE. We do not take up any sword, we only exercise the rules relating to the Kingdom among the Lord's people. We cannot force the

world to fall in with them. As soon as we do this, we make a grave mistake. The forcing of arrangements of saints like the first day of the week upon the world, is contrary to the whole spirit of believers in the present dispensation. The world is put on one side, the judgment of this world is marked out, and believers are thus called to an entire separation, in the power of the Holy Spirit, from all that the world holds true, Among themselves there is to be a recognition of the Lord Jesus Christ, in accord with His expressed wish. They are meanwhile to SUBMIT themselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake. This is part of His will until He returns with the sword. But AMONG THEMSELVES in the worship, and in the ministry, and in the fellowship which exists among the Lord's people, they recognise that He alone is the Exalted One. Thus we have an aspect of the Kingdom now, though the Kingdom is related to "That Day", and I think if this point is brought before us, and if we are to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, we shall have few difficulties with regard to the expression the Kingdom of God. We shall see the appropriateness of the term, and understand why it is that at the end of the book of Acts when Paul was at Rome itself, and among Gentiles, he was still preaching that Kingdom of God and teaching the things that concern our Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, the apostle in the last epistle he wrote says, "Remember Jesus Christ of the seed of David according to my Gospel". In other words, he connects his gospel with Christ's relationship to David, - The Gospel of the Kingdom.

Oh how wondrous is God's love to the lost, which we have received. That we, who were under a penalty of deserving a death sentence which was indeed passed upon Adam and all related to him, that we have a life deliverance, and have been made the righteousness of God in Christ. Small, small indeed, are all the treasures earth can offer us. Small, small indeed, are all our losses for His sake. If we do remain under, it will be but for a few years. If we lose the world's esteem and lose the world's glories, what are they compared with the glory which our Lord has given us? We were loved with an everlasting love though altogether loveless, and being united to our beloved Lord we shall be with Him, part of that glorious church which He shall present to Himself. Oh that it may be ours, with true spiritual earnestness, to realise how the expression "church" and the description of the Kingdom alike call us forth from fellowship with the world. Now is not the time for settling down. It is not by an accident that this subject has been appointed for our first Friday since the declaration of war. The things around us which we shall consider more fully on Monday, if the Lord will, and to which I would earnestly invite the Lord's people at Forest Gate, the things around us which are so perplexing and so serious only remind us that as we behold them coming to pass our redemption draws nigh. "He that shall come will come and will not tarry", and we are waiting for the placing as sons, even the redemption of the body.

Q. In connection with the church, am I right in taking the child born, in Revelation 12 as the re-birth of the church?

A. I do not know Scripture for the term you use, but it seems that in Revelation 12 there is to be a revival of saints consciously in heavenly places, and as the passage is associated with a woman, it implies a collective unity, a woman being a type of the church. I should suggest that there will be a revival as to the church.

Q. Why is this called a child born there, and Scripture says, in one of the other epistles, "Till we all come into the unity", and then there are some who say that we have stepped out of the childhood into that which is perfect.

A. Yes, first of all, with regard to this passage the word "child" is undoubtedly used, but that there is also a stress upon the MAN-child, the male of strength. It seems fitting, since the man-child is brought forth at the beginning of the 1260 days that it should be described from the child's standpoint, but the climax undoubtedly will be the perfect man. The measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, the contrast with Antichrist, THE man, for we read that he has the number of MAN. You see we have the woman and the man linked with Antichrist, in Revelation 17, and we have the woman and the manchild in this passage. The woman is a system of iniquity leading up to the man Antichrist. The woman here leads up to a figurative manchild. There is a definite, if not a complete contrast, but nevertheless Scripture implies

that there will be more manifestation of power and that there will be more setting forth the preparation for reigning, by the terms man or manchild. Scripture does not bring before us independent queens with approval, though as believers, we acknowledge ALL authority. Undoubtedly the bride will share the King's ruling, but when the aspect of the bride is put on one side there is no Scripture for queens. Babylon is marked out as evil in that very connection. Consequently it is not surprising that though we read of the Lord's people reigning with Him, from the Bride's standpoint linked with Him, yet where there is a stress on ruling and dignity and power that they will have as a reward for their faithfulness, the man-aspect comes into prominence. As to the words of 1 Corinthians 13, - when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be put out of working order. I take it that we are of one mind this cannot refer to the present time, for earlier we read, "We know in part, and we prophesy in part". If that which is perfect has already come, we know even as we are known! Surely we cannot conceive of such a condition of things to-day. We rejoice in what we do know, we are very thankful for all the Lord has taught us. We have no complaints to make about the present from God's standpoint, but I should be grievously disappointed if our knowledge was to be limited to our present knowledge and I take it every brother would feel the same.

Q. Those who are raised after the Lord's resurrection, - will they eventually be in the church?

A. Yes, I believe so, according to Ephesians 1. 10. in Christ.

Q. The catching up of the manchild to God's throne is not quite clear.

A. The manchild is brought forth in heaven, is it not? Consequently there is nothing earthly with regard to the manchild. The woman has a two-fold position. She is seen in heavenly places with heavenly surroundings, and THEN she is seen in the wilderness just as the Lord's people in Hebrews are viewed within the veil and outside the camp; - the two positions being commonly brought before us, and in that order. She is seen in heavenly places first, and we can bear persecution IF we live in the presence of the Lord first, but the manchild is never viewed with respect to tribulation. The manchild comes forth, if I mistake not, as a holy contrast with the ephah of Zech: 5 and in this aspect would bring before us a certain powerful reviving, which will anticipate the glory of THAT DAY. The manchild then is snatched to God and His throne for preservation's sake, for that seems the aspect here. The object of the dragon who draws the third part of the stars of heaven, and thus draws down individual believers is to destroy the united testimony. He desires to devour her manchild as soon as it is born. As our life is hid with

Christ in God, so God will grant a fulness of realisation of this in the last days, and will make it perfectly clear that though the system of truth is to be persecuted on earth, yet believers have a heavenly hope and a heavenly security. As soon as the manchild is seen in heaven, the woman is no longer seen in heaven. If the woman remained in heaven and the manchild as well, I think there would be a grave problem. The woman disappearing from heaven at once, and persecution reaching its climax, I think, gives the key. In heavenly places the woman aspect is followed by the stronger one of the manchild, but in tribulation the woman still remains the woman. Is it at all clear?

Q. A little clearer.

A. The point of the woman disappearing from the heavenly places is so important in this context. If you take it that the Lord grants particular grace and particular spiritual blessing in so wondrous a condition of fellowship to His dear people in those days, those who are associated with the manchild testimony inside the veil, will also be part of the suffering-woman-testimony on earth. A deeply important passage is at the end of the chapter. The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed which keep the commandments of God and bear the testimony of Jesus Christ. Just as we have the united woman at the beginning of the chapter and the individual stars cast down, so here we have the preserved woman at the end of the chapter, but the individual saints may lose their lives. He will think to wear out the saints of the

Most High.

Q. What did you intend to signify, when you said "remain under".

A. The term for "suffer" is literally "remain under". This implies a contrast with standing up for one's rights. As soon as a child of God takes any share in agitation, or in politics even by voting, I take it unless that sin is confessed, he forfeits the promise to have special position in the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus.

Q. Have you any Scripture for that?

A. "If we remain under, we shall reign with Him", is the passage that was on my mind, which implies that if we do not remain under we have not the enjoyment of the promise that we shall reign with Him. Do we accept the first part of it, as being conditional?

Q. It is not what I accept, I want to get the Truth.

A. Do we accept the first part of it as being conditional in Scripture - "If we remain under"?

Q. I do not think that refers to the point at all that you were speaking about.

A. But just let us look at the whole of the passage.

Q. I should like to get at the truth of it. I take no part in politics and I was asked about it some little while ago, and I said, the world will take care of its own certainly, and I am not under the rule of the prince of the

power of the air, but I do not know that I have a passage of Scripture that I can quote to say that I should not do it. Now can you give me one?

A. One passage that has been a great help to me is John 18. "Now My Kingdom is not of this world, IF My Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight", which seems to me to show that the Lord sets before His disciples one of two things, - absolutely no share in politics; or taking up the sword to fight for the crown rights of the Lord Jesus. As the latter is forbidden, the other alternative stands out, and the context stands out, - NOW is the judgment of this world, and after such words no saint has a right to take a share in the arrangement of a judged world. The world was not thus judged before. NOW is the judgment of this world. But yet though I recognise that, and would lay a stress on Phil. 3 our citizenship is in heaven, which seems also to rule out partnership for we cannot be citizens of two places....

Q. Then you think a child of God has no right to take any part at all in municipal affairs, political affairs, governmental affairs of the country?

A. He would be taking a share in a judged world.

Q. You think he is cut away from it all.

A. Yes. But though those passages are deeply important, I still return to 2 Timothy 2 as being perhaps one of the clearest passages. Let us read it in its context, "Faithful is the word" - then we have four "if's", two of which are blessed,

two of which are very solemn. The first two are "if we died with Him (past tense) we shall also live with Him". Every believer died together with Christ as 2 Cor. 5 says. Every believer will live with Him. He died for us that whether we wake or sleep we shall live together with Him. Every believer will live, there is no doubt about the promise, which is unconditional. It is once and for ever settled. "If we remain under" is no longer past, but present, and implies a continuance patiently in a place of submission, and so we have a parallel with the expression of Matthew 5. The meek shall inherit the earth. The Lord Jesus in Himself has shown what meekness means in the present time. I know that it is possible to be meek, like Moses, and rule a nation, but the Lord Jesus has explained what meekness means by His attitude to the world's politics. When one came to Him and asked Him to take a share, He said, "Man, Who made Me a Judge or a divider"?

Q. That is quite true, but did not Paul claim his citizenship in Rome when they were going to flog him. He says, "I am a Roman".

A. Paul claimed it.....

Q. And he says, "You have no business to flog me because I am a Roman."

A. Paul claimed it more than once, and after he had claimed it in the Acts he does not seem in the Philippians to be very strongly in favour of claiming it, for in Philippians he speaks about his bonds for Christ being manifest, and his rejoicing in them, and he does not plead "I am a Roman citizen,

they ~~w~~ought not to do this to me", but most patiently bears and gives the testimony of Phil. 3. 21 as much as to say, if he had his younger days over again he would not have so much of the claiming of the earthly citizenship, and more of the claiming of the heavenly.

Q. I suppose that was after he was caught up to the third heaven, and had the revelation of the mystery of the church.

A. The fulness of what he heard in connection with 2 Cor. 12, I do not think we can say. If he says he heard certain things that are unlawful to utter, I question the wisdom of saying what they were.

Q. So do I.

A. It is almost intruding into the things which are not revealed. But returning to 2 Timothy 2 - "If we remain under, we shall also be kings together with Him." We shall also reign with Him. Yes, IF we remain under we SHALL also ^{together} reign/with Him. Does not this imply that if we do not remain under we have no promise of reigning together with Him? I wish to call attention to the fact that I tried to carefully use the words "We have no PROMISE of reigning together". I am perfectly aware of this that the Lord often gives His people, both now and in the future, much more than they can EXPECT. One of the best ILLUSTRATIONS I know is the position of Abraham and Lot. Lot in Sodom takes a governmental position. He sits in the gate and tries to

reform[#] it, he has therefore no promise. He vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds, but he has no promise as to the Kingdom, not one. The promise is to Abraham outside. Abraham will share the Kingdom. The Lord says, "I give this land to thee and thy seed". There is not the slightest doubt about it. Not only "to thy seed" but "to thee" also and Abraham must be raised up to have it. That Lot must be glorified with the Lord, I am perfectly sure, for He is righteous Lot. But that Lot will have the kingdom I have no promise, and again I am compelled to say that if we do not remain under we have no promise that we shall reign with Him. It adds, if we deny, That One also will deny us.

Q. The question is, Am I denying the Lord in fulfilling my citizenship? Is it denying the Lord if I acknowledge the Lord in every position in my life? Do I lose my heirship of 8th of Romans?

A. I do not think^I/quite identified the two, if we do not remain under, and if we deny. "If we remain under" is a blessed privilege, "if we deny" is the next statement, indicating to what the absence of remaining under will lead. I did not draw the inference that at once the failure reached this, but Scripture hints the tendency of it. As to Romans 8 the passage is, I think, fairly plain, when we punctuate it as I believe we must.

"If children then heirs, heirs on the one hand of God; BUT

joint-heirs with Christ IF SO BE that we suffer together, Every believer, because a child, is an heir of God, BUT a joint-heir with Christ if so be that we suffer together", and where God puts "but" and where God puts an "if" I feel I dare not leave either out.

Q. "Timothy 2. 4. "No man that warreth".

A. Yes, that should express our heavenly object.

Q. Distinction between heir and joint-heir.

A. Therefore will I divide him a portion (heirs of God) with the many, and HE SHALL DIVIDE THE SPOIL WITH the strong, (joint-heirs with Christ).

Here is something beyond.

A. "The spoil I will divide for him with the many". God the Father will give to all believers a share in the glory. He (Christ as King) shall divide the spoil with the strong; this is an additional privilege for the strong ones, not for all the "many". Those who are strong to resist. It seems to me this is the testimony of the whole Scripture, and otherwise the words which declare that if any man's work is burnt up he shall suffer loss, are robbed of their meaning. That suffering of loss must be a felt reality, or it is no loss at all, should speak with solemn bearing to all of us, particularly at such a time as this. Years have passed by and the separation in love to the Lord was never more needed that He may be glorified in simple and devoted faithfulness springing from love to Himself.