

This afternoon according to the order of the blessed Scripture we shall endeavour to speak to "In the world ye shall have tribulation." It is a remarkable word spoken by the dear Lord immediately to His dear disciples and to His beloved children in all dispensations and ages for substance, power, love, glory, beauty. Seeming to anticipate the gloom and anxiety and distress as the Lord infallibly knows, fills the poor, troubled, afflicted hearts and minds of His dear people often, and remember as the hymn says,

"That human <sup>heart</sup> He still retains,  
 Though throned in highest bliss  
 And feels each tempted member's pains;  
 For our afflictions His."

The best example on the earth level is as it relates to true parents who have love. It is obvious to you when there is pain or distress, sorrows and afflictions of your own flesh and blood, especially your own dear children and theirs, you feel it in a unique way in your heart. It is a blessed, precious thing especially if it is on a spiritual level. Are they in trouble, cast down? How deeply you feel it in your breast. You are pained when they are. Can you conceive of the infinitely holy, human heart and the perfect susceptibility to the feelings of His tremendous family, yet He feels for all personally. I was to say this. Knowing infallibly how burdened, anxious, fearful, troubled, distressed, wounded, sore the Lord's people often feel in tribulation, how kind of Christ our Saviour to immediately say this; "But be of good cheer." If the Lord says it it means He is going <sup>to send the</sup> joy of His presence to your soul, and cheerfulness as the beams of the Sun of Righteousness to your path. And in providence when you are dejected, if He says "Be of good cheer" it is to relieve you. He will appear for you, set before you an open door. If in relation to your body He says "Be of good cheer" it may be the precursor of a great improvement in your condition. So fear is dissipated when He says "Be of good cheer." I admit that most of my prayers in private contain an appeal to the Lord of His mercy to come and cheer us. The rays of the Sun of Righteousness are wonderful and some of you need

this.

In the order of the sacred Scripture it is with us to attempt to work out together this simple clause. "In the world - while you are in it, not of it, passing through it as strangers and pilgrims on the earth. In the world: it is not confined to any particular phase, all phases, for the Lord's people begin a path of tribulation when they are born again, when they are young. I believe in the congregation at Dicker we have some dear young people who have been brought into tribulation in early life, and the Lord knows the depth of it. You may be left to carnal reason and wonder why it is your lot to walk in a path of sadness, disappointment, frustration. You see others forging ahead and have all they wish for, and you are putting your head on the pillow and weeping before Christ. You will prove you have the best of it. Dear young people come into trouble in the early days of life. "Be of good cheer." You little <sup>know</sup> what compensatory blessings the Lord has in store for you. One thing I can tell you is, if you have Jesus, if He is yours, as the hymn says you have an immortal store. So the term tribulation covers all phases and ages in the whole spectrum of <sup>the</sup> life of a child of God. In every phase of life there are peculiar distressing things that belong to today. Nothing will separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord - nor things present, nor things to come. This has been made a great blessing sometimes: "things present." They are current and topical; they belong to 1982. So tribulation relates in various ways to the whole spectrum of life to a child of God. I hope you are not under an illusion that as you advance and come to a further stage of life that you will become more immune in relation to tribulation. It tends to increase and deepen. The Lord's older people come into deeper things than when they were young. That is with God. It appears that father Israel with all the tribulation had the last <sup>years</sup> seventeen comparatively in joy and peace. No doubt he longed for his own land and the Happy Land, but the Lord cleared everything up, delivered him in the heavy trial he had walked so long in relation to Joseph, who as he supposed was dead. It was a wonderful season when he could see God's purposes fulfilled.

I will try to call over with you the definition of the term used here of tribulation. It is here unique and exclusive. "Man is born unto

trouble, as the sparks fly upward." Tribulation is the fruit of sin, the fall of man, the violation of the moral law of God, of disobedience, and it is the result of the curse of God for sin. Although they are safe from the agony of God's vindictive anger, fiery wrath and condemnation, the people of God measurably reap what they have sown, and this forms part of their tribulation. If only we could fully realise, solemnly, that all our acts, behaviour, spirit, speech, and all we do is sowing seed. A number of years pass and there is a measure of reaping what we have sown. It is solemn. With the people of God they are delivered from vindictive anger, fiery wrath and the curse, but it is a painful path to tread and you have no question to ask. It is one of the principle laws of creation. As we have had seed time, now it is harvest. We are continually sowing - unkindness, enmity, things that are contrary to the precepts of the gospel and the law of God and whatever is in opposition to the gospel, the means of grace, the observation of the Lord's Day. Take neglecting of the Lord's Day; it is sowing seed and if the Lord has a favour there is a reaping. (As you know I am not speaking in a harsh way. I am speaking truth.) There is love and mercy in it, but if we could realise as we sow we reap. God brings home this truth: if we did reap what we have sown through life according to the strict tenor of the law, we should reap damnation. "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." I will tell you for the sweetness itself that is in it; the dear Lord's people reap what Christ has sown for them. So in all His Suretyship priestly work of atonement, obedience, suffering, agony, Passion, death, resurrection God's people reap what Christ has sown. He sowed it for you. That is why you reap peace, joy, deliverance, mercy. This is a great truth I would love to stay on. I am not discouraging you, this is a warning to all. You will have tribulation but you will reap what Christ has sown for you. It is wonderful when a poor soul is brought to the Church of God and breaks down and weeps because of the mercy of God shown in a special way. They refer to their past life and the Lord has shown mercy, grace and love and they weep before Him and His people do. I believe some feel there are days ahead of weeping with the family and dear ones, and they will be mingled tears with much of joy.

We have referred to the origin of trouble. Then the Lord did something wonderful for His dear people in relation to trouble. Being their Surety He took the sting from death - the sting was the curse - and He took the sting from all trouble. Death is the terminal trouble. There is no sting in the troubles of the Lord's people, no wrath, no curse, no vindictive anger. Having extracted the sting He injected His love. You will know it in experience. Tribulation is exclusive to the people of God; it has the love of God in it, and it is plenary, not isolated, not a few troubles. This the Lord has done for all His people. And He went further: He took tribulation into the Covenant and made it a means of grace to immortal souls by the sanctifying power of the Spirit. That is why we could read Romans 8. 28. He made sanctified tribulation a means of grace, and one of the benefits that accrue to you is the weaning from all of the flesh, and it is a means of bringing you nearer, closer to Christ. It is a great blessing....He took it up. "Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." He made it a means of your entering into the fellowship of His sufferings. I hope this blessed teaching of the Spirit will be invaluable to you and you will prove every step of it. You will see how the Lord sanctified tribulation to wean you from the flesh and all below. The better part of it is to draw you closer, nearer to Christ and the things of Heaven and Glory so much more valuable and precious. That is tribulation.

It is obvious that tribulation comprises an immense variety of things in the hand of God. Although the people of God may walk a similar path, no two walk exactly the same path in tribulation. This tends to give you in life as you go deeper into a path of tribulation, a solitary path - not on all levels. There are levels where you have communion one with another, but there is a deep level where you walk a lonely path. It is well nigh impossible to know another completely, however much we love. We do not know ourselves, and though you may have a number of years of happy marriage there are areas that you never know. I am sure those who have been led into a deeper path will appreciate what I have said. It is between the soul and God. We must stand alone, die alone, walk alone in many ways. There are a variety of things, afflictions of body,

of the mind, of the soul, many difficulties and trials in families, all types of things. "The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy." There is tribulation. Your temperament is a tribulation to you; your body of sin and death is, your besettments are. Many things form tribulation. Be of good cheer, you have a wonderful, faithful, compassionate High Priest. So the dear Lord Jesus knowing how His disciples felt and would feel later in losing His physical presence said, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace."

There is another aspect of divine peace. It would be impossible for a child of God to live and to follow Christ in a path of tribulation without the precious, heavenly character of peace. If you never knew the peace of God in your soul it would be impossible to walk the path to Heaven. The Lord gives us His peace. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace." He brings peace to your soul as He speaks powerfully, sweetly, wonderfully to your heart precious words. I will mention something you have heard before. I always think of a number of years ago when the ambulance arrived at a farmhouse in Horam and a dear friend was to be conveyed to Harrow to lie on his back for twelve months. Imagine the devastation in his mind. This goes down in the annals of the Church: his dear father was there as they brought him out, and he said to him, (I believe he changed a word)

"Cheer up, despondent soul;  
On Jesus' aid rely;  
He sees us when we see not Him,  
And always hears our cry."

"These things I have spoken unto you." I believe that was the word that carried him through: the Lord revived it in his soul. See what a word can do, what faith can do by the Spirit. This is lovely to me.

"Cheer up, despondent soul;  
On Jesus ' aid rely;  
He sees us when we see not Him,  
And always hears our cry."

So He says, "These things." The Lord kept telling them things that would be for their peace. I will refer to a few of them. They comprised all He ever said to them, and in the three chapters of His farewell address. The first to bring peace was, "Let not your heart be troubled:

ye believe in God, believe also in me...Your believing in God will be made comfortable when you behold Me."

"Till God in human flesh I see;  
My thoughts no comfort find;  
The holy, just, and sacred Three,  
Are terrors to my mind.

But if Immanuel's face appear  
My hope, my joy begins;  
His Name forbids my slavish fear;  
His grace removes my sins."

Believing in God is made wonderful as you believe in Jesus.

"His Name forbids my slavish fear;  
His grace removes my sins."

"These things I have spoken unto you." "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." Do you remember when you knew the blessedness of it as those who had it spoken into their breasts with divine power? It takes trouble, anxiety, fear away and He fills you with peace. You leave all in the hands of your Beloved.

And He says later, "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." There is peace there. You can go to your Beloved and what you ask in His name He will do. He gives you faith to plead and you get an answer. O the zephyr breezes that fill the spirits of the Lord's people in tribulation when He says, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." Divine peace flows. And He says, "The world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.... And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace." The Lord keeps speaking to us. So "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world," that is, every enemy you have in the world. Take sin, and see how the Lord dealt with it. He expiated it and the blessed fruit of that is manifested in the election of grace. "I have overcome the world." That is, sin. Take the poor infamous woman, well known in the neighbourhood, a base character. The Lord had mercy on her. She came behind Him weeping as He sat at meat. "I have overcome the world." Sin had no power over her. She was liberated from the power of sin because Christ overcame. Satan could not overcome, sin could not because she was forgiven. "Thy sins are forgiven." "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

And the poor dear man we have been speaking of recently, the demoniac, and the Lord cast them all out. He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and the dear man was sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind. See how He has overcome the world in relation to death. Death to those under the curse of God is the greatest enemy, armed with eternal vengeance, vindictive anger. The Lord conquered death by dying and made it a kind friend who comes peacefully. We have the example of father Israel. "He gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people."

"Hail, blessed time! Lord, bid me come,  
 And enter my celestial Home,  
 And drown the sorrows of my breast,  
 In seas of unmolested rest."

[The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible, appearing to be bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. It contains several lines of text, including what appears to be a prayer or a passage of scripture, but the words are too light to transcribe accurately.]