

We today do not often meet the devil as a roaring lion. Our forefathers met him in this regard, and we may ourselves before our

lives are over. But today persecution seems to us far off. Yet it is not so far off. In a third of the world, maybe half of the world, Christians are persecuted for their faith today.

I think it very unfortunate the way so many theological terms are misused. We often use terms to mean something that is quite deceptive. When I was in college we got a new president my senior year. He said to me -- I said to him, the greatest object of the

Christian certainly is preaching the gospel. That's right, he said. And he said, When I get people to give money to plant trees on the campus I am preaching the gospel." Well, that's ridiculous, but that's the way people twist terms. One term I wish would be abandoned is the term pre-tribulation and post-tribulation rapture because the term does not indicate the truth. It is an utterly false term. The important thing is that Scripture says Jesus is coming back, and on at least a dozen cases in the NT it exhorts us to look for and long for His return and be ready for it whenever He comes. But these ~~the~~ terms pre-trib and post-trib both imply that the important thing is tribulation, and the rapture is secondary. The fact of the matter is that the church has had tremendous tribulation in times past. Over and over it has had tribulation. And I'm sure that everyone == anyone living in

China or in Russia today would find it hard to imagine that there would be greater tribulation than what they face today. But the

Scripture emphasizes that we are not to know when the Lord will come back. He says, The times and the seasons the Lord has in His own hands. Even the Son does not know--or did not then know--when he was coming back, but we are to be ready at all times.