

R 4

quite vital--(Student). Mr. Toms wants us just to read now Revelation 7:13-14.

I don't know whether we want to get into a discussion of it right now, though.

(Mr. Toms) All right, Revelation 7:13-14, and one of the elders answered, saying unto me, "What are these that are arrayed in white robes? and whence are they?"

And I said unto him, "Sir, thou knowest." And he said to me, "These are they which have washed their robes, and made them white. These are they which have come

out of tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb," and that, of course, is out of the great tribulation, literally,

in the Greek, but whether this "these", "these are the tribulation saints" or

whether this refers to the whole Church and the whole Church is thought of as

having come out of the great tribulation which runs all through the age, rather than specifically to this, is a matter on which we should not be dogmatic, cer-

tainly. (Student) Yes, that's a question. Now we want to get

into Thessalonians, because in Thessalonians, in 1 Thessalonians we come with

two possibilities in mind. We come with this verse in Matthew here about the

abomination of desolation and fourteen verses later a verse about the return of

Christ, and we ask, "Is the abomination of desolation a specific recognizable

sign which Christians can know that the return of Christ is after it and there-

fore they don't need to be feeling that the rapture may come at any time before

it, and is the statement "the gathering of the elect" something which takes

place after all the tribes of the earth mourn at the end of the great tribulation?"

Is that the true interpretation of the position of the rapture, or are we to say

that these dozen or so exhortations to watch because we don't know the day nor

the hour, and what I say to you I say to all, "atch, watch", that these mean

that the first recognizable event of the complex of events is the rapture and

that Christ wants His Church so to comport themselves that they are ready whether

He shall come within the first century after Pentecost or the second century or

the third or the twentieth or the twenty-fifth, or when. He wants them to be

ready whether it is in peace or in war, in commerce and apparent success or in