

SECTION IV

PROPHECY AND SECOND ADVENT

“The Earth Abideth Forever.” Eccl. 1:4.

Will you please explain the last clause of Psalm 78:69 and Ecclesiastes 1:4? In the former text we read, “The earth which He hath established forever;” and in Ecclesiastes 1:4, “The earth abideth forever.” But is it not true that the earth will burn up with its wicked inhabitants?

No. When God created the earth, He did not create it to be destroyed. He bases His very existence upon His power to preserve His work. See Isaiah 45:18: “For thus saith Jehovah that created the heavens, the God that formed the earth and made it, that established it and created it not a waste, that formed it to be inhabited: I am Jehovah; and there is none else.” Again in Psalm 115:16: “The heavens are the heavens of Jehovah; but the earth hath He given to the children of men.” In Psalm 37 we have the promise repeated over and over, that the righteous shall receive their reward in the earth; not only the righteous, but the wicked. “The meek shall inherit the land, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.” “The seed of the wicked shall be cut off. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever.” Our Lord echoes the same thought when He declares in the Beatitudes, “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.”

In referring to the glorious triumph over sin, the prophet Daniel declares, “The kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High: His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.” Read also Revelation 21, 22, where the new heavens and earth are portrayed before us,—in other words, the heaven and the earth renewed by the power of God.

“World” in the New Testament of the King James Version, often comes from a Greek word meaning “age.” The world, or

age, will end; but the earth, the material earth, purified by the fires of the last day and the power of God, will abide forever. Sometimes “world” comes from a word meaning “the inhabited earth.” Of course, there will come a time when it will be without an inhabitant; but sin shall not work its will in the domain of God. “World” comes also from a word meaning “order, beauty, arrangement.” This, too, comes to an end. The earth will be purified from sin and will continue forever.

Warning the Antediluvians. Gen. 6:3.

Will you please explain Genesis 6:3?

The text reads as follows: “The Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.” This text is generally understood to express this: “The time of that generation was limited to the period named in the text, that during that one hundred twenty years God would, by the preaching of His servant and the sending forth of His Spirit, endeavor to bring men to repentance, before the Flood came upon the earth. The Lord never brings judgment upon men unwarned. Amos 3:7. It was not His desire that the antediluvian world should perish; but their wickedness had become so great that one or the other of two things was necessary,—the truth of God would be lost to the earth, and sin would completely triumph, or the judgment of God must fall upon those who were wicked, and sweep them from the earth.

It is not the Lord’s plan that righteousness shall perish from the earth or that sin shall eternally triumph; and He therefore gave that generation the privilege of turning to Him. He sent out Noah, “a preacher of righteousness” (2 Peter 2:5), who preached the righteousness of Christ by faith (Heb. 11:7), by the power of the Spirit of God (1 Peter 3:19, 20), for one hundred twenty years. At the end of this time all upon the earth had either accepted or rejected the message of the gospel. Those who rejected, identified themselves with sin, and chose to perish. Those who

accepted, were carried over the Flood by the ark. So it will be in the last days before Jesus Christ shall come again. God's "Spirit shall not always strive with man," for "as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man." That day of judgment will as surely come as it did in the days of Noah.

"The End of All Things Is at Hand."

Why did Paul and the other apostles in their day say that the end of the world was at hand, and that they were living in the last days, as in 1 Peter 4:7? How long has it been since the end of the world has been said to be imminent?

Christ's second coming is life to His people. Even though they may sleep in death, that sleep is but for a moment, so far as consciousness is concerned. To him who falls asleep in Jesus the next moment of consciousness is seeing Jesus come. Therefore Christians in all ages ought to be prepared for that coming, ready to meet their Lord.

The apostles wrote for all time. The word was not their word, but God-breathed through them. They wrote, therefore, for the last days as well as for their own day, and for all days in view of the last great day. But that they did not believe that the Lord was coming in their day is shown by the apostle Paul in his first and second letters to the Thessalonians. In the first epistle he again and again refers to the coming of the Lord as though it were imminent. See chap. 1:10; 2:19, 20; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:1-6. From these repeated references in the first epistle the Thessalonian brethren had come to believe that Christ's coming was impending. This the apostle corrected in his second epistle, as follows: "Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him; to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, *as that the day of the Lord is just at hand*; let no man beguile you in anywise: for it *will not be, except the falling away come first*, and the man of sin be

revealed, the son of perdition." Chapter 2:1-3. It is very clear, therefore, that the apostle Paul did not look for the second coming of Christ or the end of the world in his day.

The last days would be times of special peril (see 2 Tim. 3:1-5; Luke 21:34, and many other scriptures); Satan would do all in his power to blind the minds of men to the importance of that great event, to its nature and its time. Therefore we have the solemn warnings handed down to the last generation of men. These things are confirmed by Matthew 24 and Luke 21, which chapters clearly show that God's children may know when Christ's coming is near. "When ye shall see all these things, know that He is near, even at the doors."

Prophetic Time. Ezek. 4:4-6; Num. 14:34.

Why is the Jewish year reckoned as 360 days?

1. The application of a day for a year in prophecy is authorized by Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:4-6. 2. A Bible month is shown to be thirty days by Genesis 7:11; 8:4, in comparison with Genesis 7:24. The first passage places the beginning of the Deluge on the second month and 17th day; the second passage tells us the ark rested on the seventh month, the 17th day; and the third passage shows this period to be just 150 days, a period of five months at thirty days to the month. Twelve of such months would constitute a year of 360 days. The twelve-month year is indicated in 1 Kings 4:7; 1 Chronicles 27:1-15. 3. There is one prophetic period mentioned seven times in the Bible, as follows: "time and times and the dividing of time" (Dan. 7:25); "a time, times, and a half" (Dan. 12:7); "forty and two months" (Rev. 11:2; 13:5); "a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (Rev. 11:3; 12:6); "a time, and times, and half a time" (Rev. 12:14). If forty-two months are identical with 1,260 days, there are thirty days to the month; and if the forty-two months constitute three and one-half times, or years, there are twelve months to the year, of thirty days each. This is conclusive as to prophetic time. In the later Jewish calendars a

short month, Veadar, was added occasionally to correct the calendar, which, of course, would make correct the *average* Jewish year. See Smith's Bible Dictionary, article, "Month."

Signs of His Coming. Matt. 24:33.

You speak of general increasing wickedness as a sign of the times. Has not the world always been wicked? Have there not been many earthquakes before, and destructive ones? and so with other so-called signs of His coming?

Yes, most of the experiences that we are passing through have been duplicated at one time or another in the world. In and of itself the prevailing wickedness is not a sign that the coming of the Lord is near. The Bible declares that "the whole world lieth in wickedness;" "lieth in the wicked one," some versions give it. It is like a child lulled to sleep in the arms of its nurse. Satan is lulling to sleep the whole world in that way. The unregenerate heart has always been in rebellion against God and not subject to the will of God. Sometimes this wickedness has been unrestrained, the same as in the closing days of the Roman Empire, as in Sodom and Gomorrah, as in other ages of the world. Sometimes when God's children were living as near to Him as they ought and His Spirit was resting upon them, their very presence has been a restraining influence in the world.

The sad fact at the present time is that all the sins that are mentioned by the apostle Paul in Romans 1 as being in the heathen world, are in the last days to be found in the Christian church, among those who have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof. See 2 Tim. 3:1-5. So the perils of the last days are not because there is wickedness in the world, nor because wickedness in the world is increasing; but it is because wickedness has come into the church of Christ, and all the evil principles of the unregenerate heart are manifest among those who ought to be a restraining influence by their very presence. If the salt have lost its savor, how can it help to save that in which it is cast? When the professed church of Christ sets aside God's standard, and has none

other save the wishes of the natural heart, times are indeed perilous. And this is what the apostle points out.

There have been earthquakes before, great and terrible ones, destructive of life. These earthquakes have nearly always been confined to few localities. We hear more of them now than we did before because instruments have been perfected; and yet the very best records show that there has been a tremendous increase in the number of destructive earthquakes. Our Lord tells us that when these earthquakes occur in divers places, they are the beginning of sorrows, or, literally, the beginning of the birthpangs which shall issue in the destruction of things earthly and the coming of the Master.

The great evidence at the present time is not that there is simply one sign or two signs of Christ's coming, but *a great aggregation of signs*, a concentration of a score or more of signs all *focusing right down in this time of the end*, in which we are living; and it is the Master's words which declare, "When ye shall see all these things, know that He is near, even at the doors."

The Millennial Reign. Rev. 20:1-6.

Do not Revelation 20:6 (last part) and Revelation 5:10 prove that the reign during the one thousand years will be on this earth?

Not at all. Revelation 5:10 declares in that anticipatory song, "We *shall* reign on the earth;" but it does not say when. The thousand years' reign in the New Jerusalem in heaven is the beginning of the eternal reign; but it differs from what comes after in that it is a work of judgment based on what is written in the books with respect to the wicked. John 13:36; 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17, with Revelation 14:1-3; 15:2, 3; 19:1, conclusively show that at Christ's second coming the saints are taken to heaven, to the many mansions in the city of God. The sea of glass and the throne, Revelation 4:1-6 shows to be in heaven. During this time the earth lies empty, desolate of inhabitants. And yet the saints

the subjects, and their condition. These subjects will be made up of two classes when Christ comes,—the righteous dead who have been sleeping and are then raised from the dead, and the righteous living who will then be translated. 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 1 Thess. 4:13-17.

In the transfiguration scene we have all these concomitants: there was Christ, the glorious King, whose countenance was altered and whose garments were so exceeding white and glistening as no fuller on earth could whiten them; there was Moses, the representative of those who had died and shall be raised from the dead (Rom. 5:14; Jude 9); there was Elijah, who had been translated to heaven without seeing death (2 Kings 2:11). It was the miniature representation of what Christ's second coming will be to His people.

Peter refers to this very transfiguration scene as proof that the apostles had not followed "cunningly devised fables" when they had made known "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 1:16-18.

A word further: "Till" does not involve the meaning suggested. The whole scene of Christ's future kingdom was given to encourage the disciples in their coming task.

The Second Advent.

1. Does the second advent take place before the plagues come upon the wicked, and after the tribulation of the saints at the hands of the "beast"? Are the saints caught up between the tribulation and the plagues? If they are not then caught up, whence come the men in heaven not able to enter the temple on account of God's glory? Rev. 15:8.

2. Do the saints sit in judgment on the earth or in the air? Rev. 20:4. If not upon earth, when do they return to set up the everlasting kingdom? Over whom do they reign during the thousand years? Rev. 20:5, 6. If in the air, why, since the earth will be freed from the wicked if the plagues come before the saints are caught up?

1. The second advent of Christ takes place *after* the plagues are poured out upon the wicked; for those whom the plagues do not

destroy are destroyed at His presence, when He appears. See Rev. 16:17 and 19:21. His coming does not occur during the sixth plague. See Rev. 16:15. The tribulation of the saints under the persecuting power of the beast extended from 538 to 1798 A. D. See Dan. 7:25 and parallel scriptures. The saints are therefore caught up *after* both the tribulation and the plagues. Revelation 15:8 in the original does not say "no man," but "none," or "no one." See Revised Version. Yet there are men in heaven. When Christ ascended, He led "a multitude of captives" (Eph. 4:8, margin), who were raised at His resurrection (Matt. 27:52, 53). These assist Him in His heavenly work. Rev. 4:4.

2. The saints shall sit in judgment in heaven in the holy city, with Christ. Compare John 14:1-3; Rev. 20:4; 14:1-5; 19:1; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3. The everlasting kingdom begins in the holy city above, the capital of the new earth, which will come down upon the earth at the close of the thousand years. Revelation 20 and 21. The saints shall reign in judgment with Christ over the wicked, a judgment which will be executed at the close of the thousand years. The last question has been answered in the foregoing.

The Number From Each Tribe. Rev. 7:5-8.

Does Revelation 7:5-8 literally mean that just an even number of descendants of each tribe of Israel will be saved?

The true Israel of God are not those numbered among the tribes of earth, nor have they ever been, only as those tribes were connected with Christ by faith. There are no known twelve *earthly* tribes now. But in God's record above, where the names of true Israel are written, the twelve tribes still exist, not made up necessarily or largely from the descendants of the Hebrews, but from the believing of all nations. For it is by faith that Israel shall be saved. "And so ["by faith," verse 20] all Israel shall be saved." Rom. 11:26; also 9:6-8; Gal. 3:26-29; Eph. 2:20; 3:6. All who enter the city of God will enter as one of the twelve *heavenly tribes*. Rev. 21:12. The numbers mentioned in Revelation 7:5-8, 12,000

from each tribe, do not refer to the earthly tribes, but to those recorded in heaven; nor does it include all that are saved under each tribe, but those who are saved out of the last generation of men. The sealing work of Revelation 7:1-8 is a work which takes place just before Christ comes, and the 144,000 of that chapter are identical with the company of Revelation 14:1-5.

Months, Not Years. Daniel 8 and 9.

How do you account for the fact that it seems improbable that Daniel 9:24-27 is an explanation of the vision of Daniel 8, when the vision of the eighth chapter was given fifteen years before that of the ninth chapter when there is no hint of such a thing in Daniel's prayer (9:1-19) or in Gabriel's expounding of the vision? What year was the third year of the reign of Belshazzar? Was it 553 B.C.? Are there tablets to prove that Ussher is wrong in his reckoning?

We answer both together. There is no fifteen-year period between the two chapters. Ussher is wrong. He supposed that Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon, mentioned in the records of history that came down to him, was identical with the Belshazzar of the Bible. If that were the case, the third year of Nabonidus was 553 B.C. This did not satisfy all Bible students. It was suggested by one devout man that there must have been a second ruler in Babylon, intimated in Belshazzar's promise to Daniel. Belshazzar promises Daniel, if he will read the writing, that he will be the third ruler in the kingdom. This implies a second ruler.

Belshazzar was the second. There must have been a first. This is revealed in the tablets. One of the tablets records a prayer written by Nabonidus for Belshazzar his son, whom he had associated with himself in his kingdom. Belshazzar reigned but three years, and in the third year of his reign he was slain and Babylon was captured. There is also a tablet recording the capture of Babylon and the death of Belshazzar, or the son of King Nabonidus. Therefore the time between the visions of chapter 8 and chapter 9 is but a matter of a few months instead of fifteen years.

You will note in the eighth chapter that the vision was explained to Daniel with one exception, and that was the *time*. Gabriel, who was commissioned to make Daniel understand the dream, did so as far as Daniel was able to bear it; and the angel explained all but the matter of the time, when Daniel fainted. Daniel was still anxious to know the rest of the vision; therefore his prayer. He seemed to have connected the seventy years of captivity with the vision to some extent, and so he prayed for understanding.

The angel who had been commissioned to make Daniel understand came again. That he had reference to the vision of the eighth chapter is clearly evident from his very first words to Daniel: "At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment went forth, and I am come to tell thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision." Then he says, "Seventy weeks are determined [cut off] upon thy people;" that is, seventy weeks of the 2300 days. This seems to us very clear indeed. If there is no connection between the chapters, then Gabriel left the vision of Daniel 8 unexplained, and there is no pertinency to the words of Gabriel as he meets Daniel the second time.

The Two Witnesses. Rev. 11:3.

What is the meaning of Revelation 11:3, and who are the two witnesses?

God's law of witness is that there shall at least be two witnessing to the same thing. Deut. 19:15; Matt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1. The two witnesses of Jesus Christ were God's word in the Scriptures, and God's word in the life and works of Christ. John 5:36, 39. Thus the Father and the Son witnessed to the same thing. John 8:17, 18. Thus the Old Testament, the Scriptures which were known before Christ came, and the New Testament, in which are recorded the life and works of Christ, are God's witnesses of the ages. In a still broader sense, the two witnesses of God are His written word and the living epistle of His true church, in whom that word is inwrought and revealed. It was dimly revealed during the 1260 days of Revelation 11:3. This was prophetic of the Dark Ages of

the union of Church and State—538 to 1798 A. D.—when the enemy, through an apostate church, endeavored to destroy the witnesses of God's word. They prophesied in sackcloth, in mourning, in persecution, but they were not destroyed. Their power is in God, and the oil of the grace of His Spirit supplies the power so that every word will prove effectual, every prophecy will be fulfilled.

God's Throne. Rev. 21:3.

Will God's throne be on this earth? Rev. 21:3. Is it the throne of God the Father or God the Son?

The context would indicate that it is the throne of the Father. "Behold," says the heavenly voice; a new thing is to be seen,—“the tabernacle [dwelling place] of God is with men, and *He* will dwell with them, . . . and God *Himself* shall be with them.” “And the throne of *God and* of the Lamb shall be therein.” Rev. 22:3. How supremely fitting it is that the place where the Son of God suffered and died should be the most exalted in all the universe! Where sin's curse lay the heaviest, there God's grace will restore it, a fitting place for His throne. The time of Revelation 21:3 is after the millennium; 1 Corinthians 15:24 is before the thousand years.

Destruction of “Beast” and “False Prophet.”

When were the “beast” and the “false prophet” of Revelation 19:20 cast into the lake of fire and brimstone?

Before the millennium. The “beast” and the “false prophet” are symbols of systems which will be destroyed by the glory of Christ's presence when He comes. At that time “a fire shall devour before Him,” and the earth shall be set on fire at His presence. See 2 Thess. 2:8; Ps. 50:3; 97:3; Isa. 30:33. The last text shows that when the unveiled presence of God shall be revealed to the sin-cursed earth, the earth will be set on fire, though not universally so. But all the works of man will be broken down and consumed, and thus all earthly systems, prominent and predominating among which are the “beast” and the “false prophet,” will be destroyed. They live

and seemingly prosper till the great day of the Lord breaks upon the world, but are then taken by the calamities and snares of their own wickedness, and perish in the fires kindled by God's presence. Rev. 19:20. At the end of the thousand years the whole earth will be converted into a vast lake of fire, which will consume all of sin; and all who have identified themselves with sin will be cast into the lake of fire, where “the beast and the false prophet are [were cast],” at the beginning of the thousand years. Before the millennium these *systems* and their devotees perish as a consequence; but after the millennium the people meet the full fruition of their evil deeds as *individuals*.

The Pronouns in 1 Corinthians 15:25.

Please explain 1 Corinthians 15:25: “He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet.”

Who must reign? Who subjects the enemies? Under whose feet? In Psalm 110:1 David says: “Jehovah saith unto my Lord [Adonai], Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.” This was fulfilled when Jesus ascended on high after His resurrection and took His place at the right hand of the Father, as priest-king. Eph. 1:20, 21. So Jesus declares in His message through John, “He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with Me in My throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with My Father in His throne.” Rev. 3:21. While on the Father's throne, Jesus reigns as priest-king. Heb. 8:1, 2; Zech. 6:12, 13. When His work as priest is ended, He will then take His own throne, and reign thereon forever. Dan. 7:13, 14; Matt. 25:31. To help the reader, we paraphrase 1 Corinthians 15:24-28, as follows: “Then cometh the end [of Christ's reign as priest in the gospel dispensation of grace, Matt. 24:14; 28:18, 20], when He [Christ] shall [as king-priest] deliver up the kingdom [of grace] to God, even the Father; when He [the Father] shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power [according to His promise in Psalm 110:1]. For He [Christ] must reign [on His Father's throne, Zech. 6:12, 13], till He [the Father] hath put all His enemies under

His [Christ's] feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death. For, He [the Father in purpose] put all things in subjection under His [Christ's] feet. But when He [the Father] saith, All things are put in subjection, it is evident that He [the Father] is excepted who did subject all things unto Him [Christ]. And when all things have been subjected unto Him [Christ], then shall the Son also Himself be subjected to Him that did subject all things unto Him, that God may be all in all." Studied in the light of Christ's priesthood, the subject is perfectly clear.

Were the Old Testament Prophets Mistaken?

Were the Old Testament prophets mistaken in their predictions concerning Israel, as in Isaiah 11:11-16; Jeremiah 16:14, 15; 31:31, and other prophecies?

There are certain principles which will help us greatly to understand the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning Israel, if we will learn and apply the principles. Otherwise all is confusion.

1. Many of God's promises and covenants in the Old and the New Testament are to Israel. They come through the Jews to Gentiles. They are not to the Gentiles as such. Rom. 9:4. The Gentile, the stranger, the foreigner, is blessed only as he takes hold of God's covenants. Isa. 56:1-8; Eph. 2:11-22; Rom. 11:17. "Salvation is of the Jews." John 4:22.

2. Some of these promises and prophecies of the ancient prophets were fulfilled in the restoration from Babylon.

3. Some of these predictions are what may be called double prophecies, in which the prophet's vision included events close at hand and some far off, just as in one's view of the mountains, two peaks appear as one, though when we reach them, we find them separated by miles of valley. The prophecies fulfilled before Christ were fulfilled under the typical covenant conditions then existing; those fulfilled after Christ, according to the confirmed, antitypical covenant conditions. In the times previous to Christ, the Jews as a nation occupied the center of the field; since Christ, it is the Israel by faith, God's remnant church wherever found.

4. Some of these prophecies are conditional, depending upon Israel's acceptance or rejection. These conditions are very clearly stated in Jeremiah 18:7-10. The prophecy of the sanctuary of Ezekiel (chapters 37 to 48) is one of these. That sanctuary will never be built.

5. He who attempts to read the ancient prophecies of God concerning Israel without taking into consideration the clearer revelations of the New Testament is bound to go astray. Read the emphatic words of Paul: "By revelation He made known unto me the mystery; . . . which in *other ages was not made known unto the sons of men*, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the *Gentiles should be fellow heirs*, and of the *same body*, and *partakers* of His promise in Christ by the gospel." Eph. 3:3-6. It therefore follows that whoever fixes up a theory that excludes God's great gospel work to the world, for all alike, in which "*there cannot be Greek and Jew*, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian," is astray, and is bound to go farther astray.

In harmony with these principles, our inquirer will have no trouble in settling many difficulties. He may find many obscure texts. Let him abide by the principles; the texts will sooner or later fall into line. The new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31 was confirmed by the death of Christ upon the cross. See Heb. 8:8-10. Its blessed fruitage is forever, and all brought in by it will be of Israel.

The "Seven Times."

Kindly give an explanation of Leviticus 26:27, 28. What is the meaning of the "seven times"?

The expression "seven times" is used repeatedly in this chapter. It is sometimes said to refer to seven different years, these years, of 360 days to the year, meaning 2,520 prophetic days, or literal years; but that is not the evident thought of the expression. One reading the text will see that it states not that God is going to punish seven times and then seven times more and then seven times more. It

signifies sevenfold, that is, to the very fullness. Seven is the number of completion. The term in the original simply indicates seven, or sevenfold. The Hebrew word is used in the sense of sevenfold. See Genesis 4:24—Cain avenged sevenfold. It is used in most cases simply as a number. Spurrell renders “sevenfold” in each of the four instances where the expression occurs in this chapter. The clear, evident meaning is that, on account of the sins of the people, God would visit upon them full and complete punishment.

The Earth Desolated.

Is the earth desolate during the millennial period? What of the wicked? Where do the saints dwell during that period?

That the earth will be desolated by the destruction of the wicked is clearly shown by such texts as Isaiah 24:1-3; 34:8-15; Zephaniah 1:2, 3; and other scriptures. This is declared by the prophet to occur at the presence of the Lord (Jer. 4:23-27); and by the apostle, at Christ’s coming, which is the same thing (2 Thess. 2:8; Rev. 19:21). The reader will notice that those who have not been slain by plague and battle (“the remnant,” those who remain) are destroyed by the presence of Christ and the words He speaks. Also in connection with Christ’s coming, the righteous dead are raised, and all the righteous are changed to immortality, and are taken by Christ to the mansions He has gone to prepare, in the New Jerusalem, the city of God in heaven. See 1 Thess. 4:16; compare with John 13:36; 14:1-3.

In harmony with this, we are told that the saints “have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.” Heb. 10:34. In holy vision, John saw them there before the throne of God, on the crystal sea (Rev. 14:1-3), and heard the sound of the multitude of voices praising God (Rev. 19:1). Then, as the righteous are taken to heaven and the wicked all slain, the earth must be desolate. How long it is desolate is shown by two scriptures,—“many days” (Isa. 24:21, 22), “until the thousand years were finished” (Rev. 20:5). At the end of this period, the wicked are raised from the dead; the New

Jerusalem, the capital of the new earth, descends from heaven with the saints; Satan and his host strive to take the city (Rev. 20:7-9), and the devouring fire of God’s presence destroys them. The earth is then restored for the eternal inheritance of the righteous. Rev. 21:1-7. Thus the righteous are “recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner.” Prov. 11:31.

During the Thousand Years.

Will you please explain Isaiah 34:11-15? Does the fire destroy all the animals that live at the coming of Christ? Or are there animals on the earth at that time?

There seems to be no evidence that when our Lord shall come the second time all life on the earth will be destroyed. All human life will be destroyed. Not only does Isaiah teach that, but Jeremiah 4:25 declares, “I beheld, and, lo, there was no man.” See also Rev. 19:21. Of those left on the earth after the great wars that sweep over the inhabitable part of the globe have wrought their work, it is said, “The remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse.” That is, they will perish in the glory of Christ’s presence. But there are beasts that remain.

The fire is not, then, universal. It is kindled here and there, and the whole earth becomes a desolate wilderness; but Isaiah 34, which clearly seems to use Idumea as a type of that desolate condition, would indicate that there will be wild beasts and birds of prey which will inhabit the earth during that time. It is to these that the call goes forth to come and devour the carcasses of the men upon the earth. See Rev. 19:17, 18.

Then when the glory of God shall appear the second time, the whole sinful earth, with the exception of that place where the city stands, which has been made holy by the feet of the Son of God, will become one great lake of fire. The Scriptures do not say that the lake of fire will begin at the beginning of the thousand years, or at the beginning of the day of the Lord, but it will come in the day of the Lord. And so we read in 2 Peter 3:10, “The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; *in the which* the heavens

shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

Elijah the Prophet. Mal. 4:4-6.

Will Elijah the prophet come down from heaven and preach the truth in the last days?

The prophecy of Malachi is of twofold application. One of these applications was met in John the Baptist. The angel said of John, in Luke 1:17, “He shall go before His [Christ’s] face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for Him.” In Matthew 11:14, Jesus expressly says of John, “And if ye are willing to receive it, this is Elijah, that is to come.” Yet John was not the actual Elijah, as he expressly tells us in John 1:21, but he was Elijah in the sense of the fulfillment of that prophecy at the first advent of our Lord.

But that which was fulfilled in a single individual then, takes a great deal wider scope in the last days. One individual could go to the Jewish nation and bring before all the people of that nation God’s message concerning Christ’s first coming. But there is to go to the world a message concerning His second coming. Rev. 14: 6, 7. No one man can bear that message to the world; and so Elijah and John the Baptist are types of the people whom the Lord calls to bear His last message to the world.

Conditions in the world will be the same as Elijah and John the Baptist found. For instance, there was the strongest kind of union of church and state, contrary to God and His truth, in the days of Elijah. We have Jezebel, the corrupt, idolatrous, sun-worshipping queen, urging on Ahab to the persecution of the Lord’s people. We have, in the days of John the Baptist, Herod, influenced by Herodias, the wicked woman whom he had married. In Elijah’s day, we have the backsliding of Israel and their turning away from the true God to sun worship. So it was in the days of John the

Baptist; God’s people had departed from Him, and were sunken in cold, dead formalism, making void the commandments of God by their traditions.

Those are the conditions that exist today; and God is asking His faithful people to give to the world the great threefold message of Revelation 14:6-12. That message meets all the conditions that are in the world, and that message will go and is going with “the spirit and power of Elijah,” just as John the Baptist went. Consequently the antitype of Elijah is not some man who may call himself Elijah; it is not vested in one individual, but in the whole people that will carry God’s message to the world.

Another thought: the important thing is not the messenger, but the message. This has been true in all ages. The important thing was not Elijah—the mere man; it was the message from Jehovah which he bore to Ahab. John the Baptist, as a man, was not the important thing; and when the Jews asked him who he was, he declared, I am not this, and I am not that; but when they demanded who he was, he said, “I am the *voice* of one crying in the wilderness.” The important thing was to be the voice of God. And so in the last message that shall go to the world, the important thing is the message, and not the persons that give it; but it will be given by an entire people, in the spirit and power of Elijah.

The Seven Last Plagues.

When the plagues begin to fall, can a person tell whether he will be saved or not? Will the first plague, the noisome and grievous sore, have any effect on God’s people?

According to the ninety-first psalm, God’s children will be saved from the fearful plagues that fall upon the earth; and this is also indicated in Revelation 14, 15, 16. Certainly when the plagues begin to fall, God’s children will know that they are safe. They will suffer by seeing others suffering. They will have more or less suffering all through the time of trouble, but the plagues will not fall upon them. “Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see

the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." Every sin will have been confessed. Every wrong thing will have gone beforehand to judgment, and the righteousness of Christ will cover all. Doubtless there will be feelings of deep unworthiness, feelings sometimes of almost despondency. The righteous will cry, as did Jacob at the brook Jabbok, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." In the language of Jeremiah 30:7, "It is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it."

Identity of the Horns.

Will you kindly inform me as to whether the ten horns of Revelation 17 represent the same powers symbolized by the ten horns of Daniel 7?

Not all of them are identical, though some doubtless are. The ten horns of Daniel 7 refer to the nations into which Rome was divided during the fourth and fifth centuries, three of which were plucked up to make way for the supremacy of the papacy. Never among those original ten was there unanimity of mind or coalition of effort to exalt the papacy. Three of the kingdoms were openly Arian, or antipapal. Never did these three give either moral or military support to the papacy.

But the ten horns of Revelation 17 are contemporaneous, and are united with the beast for at least one prophetic hour, during which brief period they "have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast." Rev. 17:13. This confederacy is as yet future. These ten horns are "ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast." Verse 12.

The ten horns of Daniel 7 refer primarily to the European nations associated with the rise and reign of the papacy during the Middle Ages. The ten horns of Revelation 17 are associated with the restoration of the papacy shortly before the return of Christ. Their brief triumphal reign will end in this wise: "The ten horns

which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." Rev. 17:16, 17.

European powers will yet fulfill the specifications of this prediction. Just what international changes must precede the movement, we do not know. In all probability, some of the present nations of Europe will be numbered in the great coalition. L. E. F.

Who Is "Taken Out of the Way"?

Please explain 2 Thessalonians 2:6-8. Who is he that "now letteth," or is "taken out of the way"?

The text reads as follows: "And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming."

When the Bible was translated, the word "let" meant to restrain, or to hinder. The Revised Version renders the word, "restraineth."

To understand the text, it will be necessary to consider verses 3 and 4. The "man of sin [shall] be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God *sitteth in the temple of God*, showing himself that he is God." This is the development of "the falling away," the chief exponent of which is the papacy.

"The temple of God" is the church of God. See 1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:19, 22.

God in Christ dwells in the church by dwelling in the hearts of the individual members by faith. Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17.

Just as long as faith abides in the church, just as long as Christ in His word is held paramount by the church, it must be evident to all that the man of sin could not reign or exalt himself *in the church*. If Christ is there, there is no room for another. Christ,

therefore, must be the one who "withholdeth," or, as the Revised Version reads, "restraineth," the revelation of the man of sin *in the temple of God*, the church. But when Christ is rejected, when an apostate church tells Him to go, then the mystery of iniquity comes in. Or when the church opens the door of her heart to bid the mystery of iniquity to enter, Christ departs as an unwelcome guest. Therefore all that can or that ever did prevent the man of sin from exalting himself *in the temple of God* is Christ in the heart by faith.

In harmony with this, we suggest the following paraphrase of the Revised Version of 2 Thessalonians 2:6-8: "And now ye know that which restraineth [the mystery of God, Col. 1:27], to the end that he [the man of sin] may be revealed in his own season [foretold by the prophets, Dan. 7:25]. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work [it had begun to come into the church through unconverted men, 1 Tim. 1:19, 20; 2 Tim. 2:17, 18; 1 John 2:18; Gal. 4:8-10]; only there is one [Jesus Christ] that restraineth now, until He be taken out of the way [by unbelief]. And then shall be revealed the lawless one [as during the Dark Ages and since], whom the Lord Jesus shall slay [consume] with the breath of His mouth [Rev. 19:15], and bring to nought by the manifestation [forth-shining, brightness] of His coming [personal presence]."

"This Generation."

Does the term "this generation" in Matthew 24:34 refer to the generation to which Christ was speaking, or to some other? The term "this" would seem to make it apply to His own day.

Let us consider these particulars: First, that which Jesus gave was a prophecy of His coming and of the signs of His coming. He was answering the threefold question of the disciples, "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Consequently He was not speaking for that generation alone, but for all other generations down to the time of His second coming.

Second, inasmuch as it was the Spirit of Christ that inspired all the prophets, the Master must have taken into consideration all the various prophecies that pointed forward to His second coming. The Book is one book, the prophecies all have the one object—the second coming of Christ and the fulfillment of God's promises in Him. Therefore, in this great literal prophecy that is recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, our Lord not only gave various literal signs of His coming, but also presupposed more or less knowledge, on the part of those who would live just before His coming, of other great events pointing to the same climax.

Third, Jesus knew, because His Spirit inspired the prophets, that all the prophecies given by Daniel, and those to be given later through John, and Paul, and others, would be preached prior to His second coming; that the message of Joel would go forth, "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain;" that the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14 would reach their fulfillment in 1844; that the days foretold by the prophets, as expressed in Revelation 10:7, would be fulfilled,—in fact, that all the various lines of prophecy would culminate right down in these last days in which we are now living. He knew that these things would be proclaimed by His faithful servants, in obedience to His command, so that all the world would hear the message of His coming; and these signs, therefore, that He gave, would simply be corroboration of all the other prophecies given in His word. So "this generation" would apply not to the generation who listened to His words, but to the generation in which these prophecies culminated. The term "this" does not necessarily apply to the thing then present. The present tense and the things expressing present time are often used for the future.

Take, for instance, Exodus 12:2, "*This* month shall be unto you the beginning of months." That, of course, was at the very beginning of the first month, Abib. Instruction is then given regarding the Passover. Then note the twelfth verse, which applies fourteen days later: "I will pass through the land of Egypt *this* night, and will smite all the first-born." The "*this* night" does not refer to the particular time at which the Lord talked with Moses,

but fourteen nights from that time. These instances, and others that might be given, show conclusively that the term "this" is used in referring to the future, as well as to the present.

Our Lord carried His disciples down through a variety of signs, some of which would not at all indicate that His coming was near, some of which would increase in intensity as that day approached, and three of which would but little precede His coming—the darkening of the sun and of the moon, and the falling of the stars. But the darkening of the sun and of the moon, and the falling of the stars were to be seen not merely with the physical eye, but in the light of the prophecy. There have been many darkenings of the sun and of the moon; there have been various star showers. But that to which the Master referred was to come at a particular time,—“in those days, after that tribulation,”—that is, after the long tribulation caused by the persecution of the Dark Ages. Just prior to the time in which the days of that persecution—the 1260 years of Daniel 7:25 and Revelation 12 and 13—should end, came the darkening of the sun and of the moon; and a few years later came the falling of the stars.

Now those signs must be seen in the light of our Lord's prophecy, in order to be signs of the end, and they could not be seen until after the falling of the stars had taken place, November 13, 1833,—the most remarkable “star shower” within the records of astronomical phenomena.

But the message which should bear to the world the tidings of the second coming of Christ, which should prepare the world for that coming, could not be said to go forth until it went forth in its fullness, after the end of the 2300 days, in 1844. That is the beginning of the time of the last great threefold message recorded in Revelation 14:6-14, a positive feature of which is, “The hour of His judgment is come.” Therefore this generation to which our Lord referred was the generation that should bear to the world the last message of mercy, and proclaim the Lord's coming, with all the accompanying signs, given not simply in Matthew 24, Mark 13, or Luke 21, but in all the various prophecies of His word.

Now, just as the generation to which Noah bore witness of the

coming Deluge did not pass until the event foretold occurred, just as the generation to which our Lord first came heard the message of His coming, just so truly will the last generation to which is borne the message of His coming witness that coming. He delays it long in order to give the world opportunity to repent. The vision seems to tarry; but it is because of God's long-suffering, in pity for men who have not repented.