

Letter to Rev. L. F. Dimmick

By James S. White

North Wrentham, July 20, 1842.

REV. L. F. DIMMICK, -

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Dear Sir, - In the advertisement to the third edition of your discourse on "The End of the World not yet," speaking of Mr. Miller's Review, you say, "The latter half of the Discourse, moreover, occupied in examining the proofs of the new theory, is almost entirely unnoticed in the Review." By this, I suppose that your Discourse, especially the latter half of it, was an effort against the views of Mr. Miller, concerning the Second Advent of our Lord. As you intimate that you have shown Mr. Miller's theory is an "airy castle," I will devote a little time in the examination of your argument.

On page 22, after giving some of Mr. Miller's views of the four kingdoms in Daniel, you ask, "Does not the common view of the passage appear altogether more likely to be the true one; which makes the four kingdoms extend to the coming of the Messiah, and the establishment

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of his dispensation?" If you mean by this, that the common view makes the four kingdoms extend to the coming of the Messiah, and no farther, I would say this is *not* the common view; and if you mean that this view makes the four kingdoms extend to the coming of Christ, and then on to the time when "the kingdoms, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High," which you admit on page 23, then you mean just what Mr. Miller says; therefore your remarks on this point amount to nothing.

Again, you ask, "Is not the Christian dispensation the kingdom which the God of heaven would set up, according to the preaching

of John the Baptist, and Christ himself, when he appeared, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." I suppose you mean the gospel dispensation, and if so, the two cannot be the same, yourself being judge; for you very properly say the kingdom brought to view in Daniel vii., "is an *everlasting* kingdom." Or, do you think the gospel dispensation will last *forever*?

The kingdom in Daniel is a kingdom which the God of heaven was to set up; of course this would be God's kingdom. That the kingdom

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brought to view here is *not* the gospel dispensation, is clearly proved from the New Testament. Luke xix.11-15. The reason for which Christ spake this parable is asserted, "Because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." He, by this parable, corrected their mistake. He compares himself to a nobleman who went into a *far* country, etc.; thus he gave them to understand that the kingdom of God was *not* about to be set up, as appears, Matt.xxv.19. After a *long time* the lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them." Comparing the two places where this parable is recorded, we plainly see, that the kingdom in Daniel and the gospel dispensation cannot be the same. We also see that this kingdom will not be set up, nor appear, until Christ comes to judgment. Therefore we prove that the four kingdoms in Daniel do have reference to the final judgment, and end of the world.

In Luke xxi, where Christ gives an account of his coming and of the end of the world, verse 31, he says, "So when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." They were not to consider it *nigh* at hand, until they should see these come to pass. Are, then, the kingdom

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same? If so, pray tell us when the latter commenced. Our Lord connects his kingdom with his coming, Matt.xvi.28. "Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." This, Peter, James, and John saw in miniature on the mount of transfiguration. Matt.xvii.1-5, 2Pet.i.16-18. By this and other

instructions of the Savior, Peter learned to couple the kingdom of heaven with the coming of his Lord. Hence he says, "Who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and kingdom." So far is the kingdom of God from being the gospel dispensation, that we are taught under the latter, to pray, "Thy kingdom come." And when it comes it will fall on the Roman kingdom in its last form, the feet, and break all other kingdoms to pieces, and carry them away forever. Then will God's "will be done in the earth as it is done in heaven."

Then, again, on page 23, you say, "The millennium, moreover, or Christ's personal reign upon earth, which some are expecting, is to be but a *thousand* years; while the kingdom here brought to view is an *everlasting* kingdom." You ask, "Can the two be the same?" I answer, No. Neither can this of God and the Christian dispensation the

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kingdom be the same as any other limited time, however long. Thus the argument turns against yourself, and by your own showing, you prove that the kingdom and the Christian or gospel dispensation, cannot be the same. Besides, you speak of some who believe that the reign of Christ upon earth is to be but a thousand years. This remark will not apply to Mr. Miller; for he believes, when Christ comes to set up his kingdom, that he will sit on the throne of his father David, "and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

Pages 24-30, you devote mostly to remarks upon the little horn, brought to view in Daniel viii. You try to show that this pointed out Antiochus. You ask, in conclusion, "What will you make of those coincidences?" Now if we can credit the history of the Roman power, we know that the things spoken of the little horn will apply far more strictly to that power than to Antiochus; and I ask, in reply, What will you make of *these* coincidences? In applying the 2300 days to Antiochus, you have failed to show their fulfilment; so has every other writer that I have seen. To fail here, is to fail in the main point; and you seem to be aware of this. You might have called to your aid, Chase, Dowling, Skinner, and others;

still you would have made a sad failure. I ask, What will you make of this discrepancy?

You have thrown in a number of questions, for what purpose I cannot say. On page 26, you ask, "Must days always be reckoned for years?" I ask, Who ever said they must? Page 27, "Is the world ever called the *sanctuary*?" Who ever said it was? After noticing the 1260 days, during which time the witnesses were to prophesy in sackcloth, on page 31 you ask, "Now what evidence is there that these numbers are designed to reach to the end of the world?" What do you mean by this question? If you have read Mr. Miller, or Mr. Fitch, from whom you have quoted, you know that they say no such thing. They say, that these numbers ended in 1798. These are a sample of the questions you have put throughout your discourse. Do you *mean* to misrepresent Mr. Miller, and throw darkness upon this most interesting subject, the Second Advent of our Lord? I would hope not, though these are the direct effects.

Then you next introduce the "first resurrection," Rev.xx. which you understand to be figurative. The first argument you present is, that the book of Revelations is highly figurative.

But will not this argument against a literal resurrection apply with equal force to a literal judgment, in the same chapter? You have written verses 11-13 in capitals, thus making the language doubly emphatic. Then you say, "This is the judgment which the Bible reveals." With equal propriety I might bring the same objections to a literal judgment, and thus write verses 4-5 with a double emphasis, and say, This is the resurrection which the Bible reveals.

Again, you say that the seven churches brought to view in chapters ii. and iii., were "real churches." To apply them to seven periods, or to make them figurative, you think is "fanciful in the extreme." Why so? Are they not in a "highly figurative book?" Why, then, are they not to be understood figuratively? You have not told us. Yet you say that the resurrection is figurative; and to strengthen the argument, you say, "The *book, seals, trumpets, beasts, witnesses, dragon, old serpent, key*, and the *chain*, are all of this description." You

have gone over most of the book to find figurative words to make your argument the stronger. Now suppose I apply this to the seven churches, will not the argument hold good? In the description

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of the last church we find the following: *rich, goods, blind, naked, gold, fire, white raiment, nakedness, eye-salve, spue, door, knock*; all figurative words. Is not, therefore, the Laodicean church figurative? You say no. And you are obliged to say no. Why so? Because, if these churches are prophetic, the Laodicean being the last, the representation of it stands opposed to that character of the church, in its last state, which a figurative resurrection supposes it to possess.

This is the point to which you are driven by your argument against a literal resurrection in Rev.xx. What shall we say of the interpretation of a passage, which, in order to sustain it, compels a person to contradict himself in the interpretation of another passage? "Let the inquiring consider this point." You have said, on page 39, "The whole book of Revelations is a highly figurative book." Yet, in order to prove that the end of the world is not yet, you find no difficulty in understanding as much of it literally as will answer your purpose. I may understand the seven churches to be either literal or figurative, and my views of the first resurrection remain unaffected.

In the second place, you argue against a literal resurrection, because John saw the *souls*,

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etc. You say, "their *souls* simply." Almost from one end of the Bible to the other, the word *soul* or *souls* is used so as to include the "whole being in an embodied state." Take one example. "And we were in all, in the ship, two hundred, three-score and sixteen souls." Did Paul mean their *souls* simply, or their souls and bodies? We see that the word soul, on which you lay so much stress, does not stand in the way of a literal resurrection. You may say that the circumstances make it evident that Paul included the bodies of those who were in the ship. And for the same reason I understand John to include the bodies of those who "*lived and reigned* with

Christ a thousand years," before the rest of the dead, or wicked, lived again.

Then again you say, on page 33, after quoting verse 4, "It is a description of the martyrs. These alone, with the righteous living at the time of the judgment, who are to be changed, are to constitute the subjects of Christ during the millennium!" No other will have any share in the first resurrection. Now to me it is plain that John includes all the righteous. After noticing the beheaded for the witness of Jesus, he says, "And who have not worshipped the beast, neither his image," etc. That

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is, those who had not worshipped, nor received the mark of this world. The *martyrs* had not done this, of course, and so they are distinguished from all others in the vision of John, by their name simply. What you mean by the "change of the righteous living at the time of the judgment," I am unable to say, unless you believe with Mr. Miller, that the judgment begins and ends with the millennium.

Your third argument is, that a literal resurrection "makes two final judgments. But this by no means follows. The judgment may take place with all at one time, and the execution of the judgment may take place at different times, as believed by some who embrace Mr. Miller's views of the manner and time of Christ's coming. You ask, "Is not the sentiment at variance with all the views that have been entertained on this subject by sober men?" If you mean by two judgments, what Mr. Miller says, I would say no, and I would be glad to think that you did not know it. In support of your argument, you bring Acts xvii.30. "God hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness: "Not two days, but A DAY," on which you lay double emphasis. By this I should suppose that you mean God will judge *all* men during the time

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of 24 hours. The length of this day depends on circumstances. It evidently covers all the time that God is pleased to take from beginning to end; and this may be a thousand years, as believed by Mr. Miller; at the beginning of which the righteous may be raised

and judged, and at the end the wicked may be raised and judged. The day of temptation in the wilderness covered all the time of provocation, which Paul says was 40 years, Heb.iii.8-9; so the day of judgment may include 1,000 years. The judgment may begin with the house of God, - the righteous, - and end with the wicked a thousand years after, when those will be raised, on whom the second death will have power.

Your next refers to John v.28.29. "The hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves, shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." But why did you not make this *hour* as emphatic as you have the *day*, in the above passage, and confine it, either to sixty minutes, or to *one time*, as the latter, perhaps, is what you meant by a DAY? Was it because it would look out of place when compared with the hours in verse 25? Then you, say "Are not both classes raised and

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judged at the same time?" This passage by no means proves it. Our Savior simply asserts the fact, that both classes shall be raised and judged, and this would remain a fact though one thousand years should follow the resurrection of the righteous, as John says, "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were ended." So with your other passages; they fail, when brought to prove your position.

As another argument to prove that this resurrection is figurative, you refer to several texts where the idea of conversion is conveyed. Such as the following; 1John iii.14, "passed from death unto life." Then you ask: Is not "passing from death unto life a *resurrection*?" But unfortunately for you, the Bible does not call such a change a resurrection. In every place where you have used the word under this head, it is a word of your own making. We wish to know what the *Bible* calls a resurrection.

Then on page 80 you refer to John the Baptist, who was called Elias. You seem to think that the martyrs will live, in the same sense that Elias lived in John. That is, those who have a part in the first resurrection will possess the spirit and power of the martyrs, in the

same sense that John possessed the spirit and power of Elias. I know that this is the opinion of many. Yet I conceive that the case of John and Elias has no bearing on the subject; and for the following reasons:

1st. There is not the remotest reference to them in the account of the first resurrection, other than the fact, that they are included in common with all others.

2nd. The promise of Elias, given to the Jews, was explained to mean John, and that before he was born; "He shall go forth in the spirit and power of Elias?" But the resurrection is no where explained to be any other than what John says, "the first resurrection." The above being true, we have no more right to say that John did not mean by the resurrection just what is meant by the word when used in other places in the Bible, than we have to say, where John declares, "This is the true God and eternal life," he did not mean as he said. In both places he uses a sentence explanatory of his subject.

3rd. The case of Elias and John is not parallel, hence it fails to illustrate the "first resurrection." The promise was not made to Elijah, but to the Jews. "Behold, I will send *you* Elijah the prophet." But what Jesus says of those who have a part in the first resurrection, is

a fulfilment of promises made to those very persons. Christ told his disciples, that they who followed him, should in the regeneration, when the Son of Man cometh, sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. This, and other promises of the same kind, are never lost sight of by the Apostles. Hence Paul says, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" This promise of our Savior, John first sees in his vision, in anticipation by the whole church through their representatives. Rev.v.9,10. "For, thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us kings and priests, and we shall *reign on the earth.*" Then in chapter 20 his mind

is carried forward to the fulfilment of the promise. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads; and *they lived* and *reigned* with Christ a thousand years." Here, too, is the fulfilment of 2Tim.ii.11.12. "For if we

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be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him." I ask, can it be proper to explain the first resurrection by the case of Elias and John? You give a person the same latitude of the rest of the Bible, that you have taken of the first resurrection, and he may prove any thing, and every thing, just as his fancy may lead him.

On page 35, you object to a literal resurrection, because, as you say, "It makes the state after the resurrection too gross, too much like our present state, to be consistent with other representations of the Bible on this subject." Then you go and cover about three pages, with the opinions of different persons in different ages of the world, in order to make your objection good. Now if you are arguing against Mr. Miller, or "the new theory," as you call it, why did you not give his views, at least some of them? Was it because by so doing you could not make your objection good? If in what you have said here, you mean to give Mr. Miller's views, you have most grossly misrepresented them. There is scarcely a sentence in all that you have said under this head, which Mr. Miller believes, except two or three quotations from the Bible. Mr. Miller's views of the state of the righteous after the resurrection

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are such as John presents in chapter xxi, with which, I presume, all the righteous will be satisfied.

Then on page 42 I read the following: "The failures which have occurred in attempts to reckon times and seasons, would seem sufficient to deter any man from adventuring far in those paths." And how far may he adventure? As far as you have on page 9 in

favor the opinion that 1000, or 365,000 years "is to pass previous to the coming of Christ"? Your argument here against fixing on '43 for Christ to come, will apply with equal force to any other time. Of this you seem to be aware, hence do not, as most *commentators* have done, fix on any definite time for that event. You, however, prefer one of the longer periods; rather than think but two years, you would choose to think that three hundred and sixty-five thousand years will expire before Christ comes. Here is the trial. Mr. Miller has fixed on a time too near us. We are not ready for that event. Had he fixed on A. D. two thousand for the commencement of the millennium, and on the end of one thousand years from that time, for the coming of Christ, no one in these days would have thought that Matt.xxiv.36 was an objection to the time. In that case

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this objection would have lain in obscurity until the time had nearly expired, when, with the last generation, it might come up with as much force as it now has.

To show us the failures in reckoning "times and seasons," you have quoted Acts v.36,37. Now I am unable to see how Theudas, and Judas of Galilee, are any more like saying that Christ will come in '43, or at any other time, than the "Magna Charta" is like the "Declaration of American Independence."

You next refer us to *Thomas Munzer*, of Germany, in the sixteenth century. Well, what did he do, that has any bearing on this point? Why, he believed that "Christ would soon come, and set up the heavenly Jerusalem on the earth." And you say, "Christ did not come as he had predicted," but "the world went on as before." Then we must never believe that Christ will soon come. Therefore, those who live near the close of your three hundred sixty five thousand years, must not think that Christ will ever come, because Thomas Munzer thought so, in his day, and Christ did not come. So those who shall live at that time must set the time forward, one thousand, perhaps three hundred sixty-five thousand, rather than think it is "nigh even at the door."

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Under this head you have introduced an extract containing the names of several persons, who about the year 1700, supposed they were living on the very verge of the millennium, and who prophesied to that effect; "but their millennium did not come." This will apply with as much force to a great part of the Christian world as to Mr. Miller. And must no age ever believe that they are living at such a time? The last example or failure you have given us is, a. Mr. Edward of New York, who fixed on a certain day in 1812 for the end of the world. Now the import of all this argument is, that because several persons have failed in their opinions concerning an important event, no other person should form any opinion concerning it. Is this argument?

Again, on page 44. "If the millennium is to be *after* the judgment, and be ushered in by that great scene, no mortal can tell its commencement. It is in vain to say, that the angel told Daniel. The Savior has assured us that there is not an angel in heaven who knows any thing about it." Now, sir, unless you know more than any angel in heaven, you have in this short sentence entirely demolished your whole discourse, text and all; for you have labored through the whole, to show us how much

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evidence you have that it will not come for a long time. Now admitting that you have produced one particle of evidence to sustain your position, then the above assertion is not true. If we cannot know *any thing* about the time of an event thus far, how can we know to the contrary. It may come to-day, and if we have any evidence that it will not so come, then we know *something* about it. It therefore follows that all your arguments to prove that the end of the world is not yet, must be given up, or they must stand in opposition to the above assertion. And if you say that you did not mean to imply that we could know *nothing* about it, then I ask, How much may we know? Where shall we draw the line, beyond which we cannot go?

May we have evidence to believe that it will not come under a 1000 years, yea, 365,000 years, and then must we stop? Is this the time beyond which we cannot pass, with our knowledge of that

event? Mr. Miller thinks that Christ will come in 1843, and he thinks he brings evidence from the Bible to sustain his belief. On the other hand, you think he will not come then, nor at any other time within a thousand years or more; and you think that you find evidence in the Bible to sustain your belief. Now Mr. M. is no more sure that

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Christ will then come, than you are that he will not. Here you both stand on the same footing, with this exception; he believes God has revealed something about the time, and he gives evidence accordingly; but you believe that God has given us *no* revelation about it, yet you go on to prove from the Bible that the event will *not* come for a long time. And in order to overthrow Mr. Miller as to the "new theory," you have put language into our Savior's mouth which he never used.

The time of the coming of Christ you seem to think is like the time of a person's death, unknown. Suppose this true, what would you think if a man should undertake to prove that the day of his death would not come within ten or twenty years, or that it would be a long time before he would die?

But how does your assertion agree with the whole verse from which your text is taken? And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come. Now you say, the Savior has assured us that there is not an angel in heaven that knows any thing about it. Has not the Savior told *us* that the end shall come when the gospel shall have been preached in all the world, for a witness unto

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all nations? And if so, has he not told us *something* about the time of the end? The point now under consideration, is not whether the Savior has told us *every* thing about the time of his coming, but whether he has told us *any* thing about it. If he has told us that he will come when a certain prophecy shall have been fulfilled, then certainly he has told us so much about it; and if we may live to see the fulfilling of that prophecy, then surely we may know *something* about it. And do not the angels know as much about it as we do? If

so, and you mean that your assertions will hold true in all time, have you not made the Savior plainly to contradict himself? I leave it with the "candid" to judge.

The Savior says, Matt.xxiv.32,33, "Now learn a parable of the fig tree: when his branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the door." Here the Savior, instead of assuring us that we can know nothing about it, has expressly told us how we may know it is *nigh*, even at the door.

But what has our Savior said about the precise time? Matt.xxiv. 36, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels of

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heaven." We will now suppose he meant that the time would never come, when, prior to that event, any man or angel would know the day or hour. Now the question is, how long time did our Savior mean to include in that day? Did he mean that no man would know the year, and if so, why not say ten years, yea, ten thousand years? But he did not mean to say that we could not know within ten thousand years. Why not? because he says, when ye see all those things, "know ye that it is near, even at the doors;" and surely we cannot know that it is so near, if we cannot know when it is within ten thousand years. Then we must come back from this long time, and in doing so, where shall we stop, short of a literal day? We therefore see that "the day" in this place, which you have made to include all time, is limited by the context. So much for your assertion, that Christ has assured us there is not an angel in heaven that knows any thing about it. By the preaching of the gospel to all nations, as here intended, you say, "we are to understand, doubtless, the evangelizing of all nations." If this is what our Savior meant, then he meant to say that when all nations are evangelized, then the end shall come. Now so far as you have proved that we

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shall have a millennium in this world, you have proved, that when all nations are evangelized, the end will *not come*, the Savior's declaration to the contrary notwithstanding.

I believe I have noticed every point in the latter half of your discourse, which has any bearing on the subject: and some points, I confess, which have no bearing on the subject.

And now, what shall I say of your arguments? Should I qualify them by some appropriate words, I might be charged with using "hard names and opprobrious epithets," which charge "with some, may be good argument; with others not so." I might be reminded that such words do not become those who are expecting the coming of Christ will soon take place; which would be equivalent to saying that such a belief is calculated to have a good effect on the mind, or that if a person does not believe this, it is not so much matter what he does say. Yet I must say, that when a man, in order to sustain his cause, resorts to misrepresentation, and to argument which refutes itself, I conclude he has a poor cause to sustain. I believe that every writer against Mr. Miller, who has come to my knowledge, has done this. I am, therefore, more and more convinced that

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nothing can be said, which will show the "new theory" to be an "airy castle."

Though I have not passed a word with Mr. Miller, either directly or indirectly, upon this subject, yet to me it is plain, that the reason why he did not in his review go through your discourse, was that he thought it unnecessary. He went far enough to give a fair sample of your arguments, and then stopped. And as you have taken the advantage of his omission, I have thought it duty to notice the remainder. Were it necessary, and did my limits permit, I might here present the overwhelming evidence from the Savior and apostles, that the theory of a millennium in this world, (first hatched, I believe, in the brain of Thomas Munzer, or one of his associates, and new modelled into nearly its present form by Daniel Whitby, D. D. who died A. D. 1726,) has no foundation in the Bible. But having said already more than I intended, I will close.

That your discourse will have a general circulation I doubt not. It will be sought after and read with interest, especially by all classes of persons who love this world more than they love Jesus

Christ. With very many of those any thing, no matter what, that pretends to show that the coming of Christ is a great way off,

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the farther the better, is taken for sound argument.

Now, my dear sir, I hope you will be led to see what you have done; and before the Lord shall make his appearance, be able to undo some of the evil which your book is producing. Yet there must be some who will do as you have done; for if all believed that the day of the Lord was at hand, they would be looking for it, so that day could not come upon all the world as a snare. Hence the Bible could not be fulfilled. I therefore submit it all to Him who has said, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him."

Yours, for the truth.

J. S. W.

