

The Millennium:

OR

CHRIST'S REIGN ON EARTH FOR A THOUSAND YEARS

A Lecture by F. W. Porter

ALTHOUGH the word *Millennium* is not a Bible word, yet the doctrine to which it is related stands forth very prominently in the Scriptures. Its importance, truly, is not generally recognized by the religious teachers of the day, by whom it is regarded as a theory of somewhat of a speculative character, which may or may not be true, but which, at all events, has no vital bearing on the question of the salvation of man. When, however, the truth of the matter is perceived, the very opposite is seen to be the fact. The doctrine is discovered to have a most vital bearing on our eternal welfare, and to have a direct connection with the revealed purpose of God. It is, indeed, the very essence of the Gospel preached by Christ, in regard to which he declared that he that believed it not should be condemned. To be ignorant, therefore, of this doctrine is to be in ignorance of the Gospel, which is “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.”

Derivation of “Millennium”

The word “Millennium” is derived from two Latin words— “*mille*” a thousand and “*annus*” a year; and signifies, therefore, a “thousand years.” It is related to the revealed fact that Jesus Christ, who is now at the right hand of God, will return to the earth for the purpose of establishing His Kingdom thereon, and, in association with His immortal

and glorified saints, rule the world in righteousness for a thousand years (Rev. 20:4).

The indifference manifested in religious circles in regard to this undeniably glorious future for the earth, is not difficult to account for. It is attributable to a prevailing misconception of the purpose of God, and of the salvation revealed in the Scriptures, in consequence whereof the religious world has embraced a hope which conflicts with the doctrine of Christ's reign on earth- a hope which, notwithstanding its general acceptance, is wholly unscriptural. It is manifest that the future of the earth can excite but little interest in the minds of religious people generally. Their hope has no relation to the earth. Their desire is to leave it, and ascend to a better world on high; and their expectation is, that, at death, they will immediately wing their flight to heaven, at once to receive the fulfillment of the promises, and enter into the realization of the goodness promised by God.

The Early Christians and the Millennium

But although the doctrine of Christ' reign on the earth is lightly regarded at the present day, there is evidence that in former days it held a much more important place in the religious world. Gibbon, in his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, says: "The assurance of a Millennium was carefully inculcated by a succession of fathers, from Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, who conversed with the immediate disciples of the Apostles, down to Lactantius, who was preceptor to the son of Constantine. Though it might not be universally received, *it appears to have been the reigning sentiment of the orthodox believers...* (but) The doctrine of Christ's reign upon earth was at length rejected as the absurd invention of heresy and fanaticism."

This is a valuable piece of evidence, showing that the nearer we approach the Apostles' days, the more prominent does this doctrine

become; while as we journey down the stream of time we find it losing its hold upon the minds of men, until it is at length rejected as heresy. It is manifest that the nearer we approach the Apostles' days, the more likely we are to find the truth held in its purity; in the same way as the nearer we approach the source of a stream, the purer shall we find its waters. And coming near to the source of the stream of truth, we find the doctrine of the Millennium - to quote Gibbon's words - the "*reigning sentiment of the orthodox believers.*" We are happily able to go right to the source to the teachings of Christ and His Apostles where we find the reign of Christ on earth revealed as a *Divine* truth. We know that the truth in its purity was held then—that the early Christians, for a time, at all events, "continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine."

The Foretold Apostasy

The words of Christ and His Apostles are words of infallible truth, on which we may rely; but we cannot place the same reliance upon those who succeeded them. The more especially would it be unwise to do so, seeing that the Apostles predicted that the churches would not continue to hold the truth, but would in course of time, depart from the faith. A fearful apostasy was foretold by the Apostle Paul – an apostasy which had, indeed, already commenced; and he declared it would continue until men would have so far fallen as to reject the truth entirely, and be turned unto fables. In exhorting Timothy (2 Tim. 4:3) to faithfulness as the servant of Christ, he declares in solemn language: "*The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; AND THEY SHALL TURN AWAY THEIR EARS FROM THE TRUTH, AND SHALL BE TURNED UNTO FABLES.*"

History has shown the fulfillment of this prophecy in regard to the truth under consideration. The doctrine of the second coming of Christ to reign on the earth, upon which the hopes of the early Christians were set, was,

after a time, rejected; and a fabulous hope of a kingdom in the skies, to be inherited at death, was embraced in its stead.

The word of God is in our hands today, to satisfy us as to the truth of the doctrine under consideration. If it be true, there is a glorious prospect ahead - a day of gladness for mankind; the contemplation of which must assuredly fill our hearts with an earnest desire to participate in that goodness which must necessarily characterize so glorious an event as the presence of the Son of God as the monarch of all the earth.

What saith the Scripture?

Coming then to the Bible, the first point to be noticed is the fact - the absolutely certain fact - that *Christ is coming again to the earth*. He declared: "I WILL COME AGAIN" (John 14:3). The manner of his coming is placed beyond all controversy by the words of the angels who appeared to the disciples on the Mount of Olives, as they witnessed the ascension of their Lord and Master into heaven. 'THIS SAME JESUS, which is taken up from you into heaven, SHALL SO COME IN LIKE MANNER as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). *The same Jesus*, who was here eighteen centuries ago, will return to the earth, and return *in like manner* as he went. Christ is therefore coming *personally* and *visibly*, to be present on the earth, as really as before. When he comes again, he comes - not as a sufferer, not as a man of sorrows - but as a KING and a CONQUEROR, *to occupy a throne of glory*. His own words are: "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, THEN SHALL HE SIT UPON THE THRONE OF HIS GLORY". (Matt. 25:3 1).

"This is the Heir"

The nature and locality of that throne are made plain by the declaration of the angel to Mary in regard to Jesus : 'The Lord God shall give unto Him THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID, *and he shall reign over the*

house of Jacob for ever" (Luke 1:32). The throne of David, situate at Jerusalem is a historic fact, and though it is non-existent at the present time, numerous are the predictions that Jesus Christ shall occupy THAT THRONE, and reign as king thereon. The following prophecy contained in Jeremiah 23:5, may be taken as a sample of many declarations to that effect: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a KING SHALL REIGN AND PROSPER, AND SHALL EXECUTE JUDGMENT AND JUSTICE IN THE EARTH. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called – THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

"David Speaketh Concerning Him"

David himself; in anticipation of the day when his Son and Lord should occupy his throne, ruling in righteousness and in the fear of God - a ruler who should be *"as the light of the morning, hen the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds"*— declares, 'THIS IS ALL MY SALVATION AND ALL MY DESIRE" (2 Sam. 23:3-5). David recognized that Christ was coming for this purpose: for, says Peter, David knew that *"of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, God would raise up CHRIST TO SIT ON HIS THRONE"* (Acts 2:30).

These references are sufficient to show that Christ is coming as a Monarch, to occupy the restored throne of David, and to reign on the earth as the promised King of the Jews.

The Saints "Shall Reign On Earth."

Where Christ reigns, there must the saints also reign: "If we suffer [with him], we shall also reign with him" (2 Tim 2:12). Where? In heaven? Unquestionably not. No suggestion is given in the scriptures of a reign in heaven. Christ's rule is to be "in the MIDST OF HIS ENEMIES" (Psa. 110:2), and the reign of the saints is connected with "CITIES," with "NATIONS," and with "THE EARTH." In a parable uttered by Christ, in

which he depicts the judgment of his servants when he returns, the reward bestowed on the faithful servants is “*authority over cities.*” “*Have thou authority over TEN CITIES.*” “*Be thou also over FIVE CITIES*” (Luke 19:17-19). Manifestly these are cities on the earth. “Do ye not know,” says the Apostle Paul, “**THAT THE SAINTS SHALL JUDGE THE WORLD?**” (1 Cor. 6:2). One of the last promises made by Christ to him who overcomes and keeps his works unto the end is: “*To him will I give POWER OVER THE NATIONS, AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON*” (Rev. 2:26). In further confirmation of these passages, we have in Rev. 5:10, a prophetic picture of the redeemed, rejoicing in the possession of salvation, and they are represented as praising him who has redeemed them, and saying: “*Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, AND WE SHALL REIGN ON THE EARTH.*”

A Vision of the Millennium

Turning to Rev. 20, we find *the period* of this reign stated, from which the word *Millennium* is derived. We are here carried forward to the time of the Resurrection when the reign commences. John, in vision saw *thrones*, and certain ones seated on them, and “judgment given unto them.” He saw those who had been dead raised from the dead; and, having been accepted by Christ at his judgment-seat, made immortal and reigning with him. The Apostle says (Rev. 20:4), “**THEY LIVED AND REIGNED WITH CHRIST A THOUSAND YEARS.**” And then follows, in verse 6, this statement: “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such, the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, **AND SHALL REIGN WITH HIM A THOUSAND YEARS.**” Here, then, is the doctrine of the thousand years’ reign of Christ and the saints placed beyond all question. It is not, as some imagine, only to be found in this passage. The only new point revealed here is the *period* of the reign - the revelation following a vast number of prophecies and promises referring to that glorious event.

“The Gospel of The Kingdom”

This coming reign of Christ to bless all nations is good news indeed. It is *the* good news - the Gospel - which Christ preached. “He went throughout every city and village, *preaching and showing the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God*” (Luke 8:1). He said himself, “I must preach *the Kingdom of God* to other cities also: for therefore am I sent” (Luke 4:43). The connection between the Kingdom of God and Christ’s reign on earth is seen when we comprehend the nature of the Kingdom of God. The prophet Daniel, referring to this Kingdom, says that at a future time, which has not yet arrived, “*The God of heaven shall SET UP A KINGDOM, which shall never be destroyed; and the Kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these Kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever*” (Dan. 2:44). Here is the establishment of the Kingdom brought before us. When is this? We are told in chapter 7:13-14. It is *at Christ’s* coming. Daniel says he saw, in vision, *one like the SON OF MAN COMING, and there was given him DOMINION, and GLORY AND A KINGDOM that all people, nations, and languages should serve HIM.*” In vs. 18 and 27, the inheritance of the saints in this Kingdom is declared: “*The saints of the Most High shall take the Kingdom, and possess the Kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.*” – “*The Kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the Kingdom UNDER the whole heaven shall be given to the people of THE SAINTS of the Most High.*” The “Kingdom of God” and the “Reign of Christ on Earth,” are, therefore, practically synonymous terms: the thousand years’ reign being the first stage of the Kingdom of God on Earth.

The Kingdom of God in the Past

The nature of the Kingdom of God is more plainly shown by a consideration of that Kingdom in the past. God’s Kingdom has once existed. The Kingdom of Israel was THE KINGDOM OF GOD. It is described in the Scriptures as “*the Kingdom of THE LORD*” (1 Chron.

28:5): the throne of that Kingdom being, therefore, the “*throne of THE LORD*” (1 Chron. 29:23). The Kingdom of Israel was a Kingdom of Divine origin: all its constituent parts - the land - the people -- the metropolis-being divinely chosen, and its laws and appointments given directly by God.

The Promised Restoration

It is God’s purpose that that Kingdom shall exist again: not, however, to be confined to the land of Israel, but to extend over all the earth. In preaching the “Kingdom of God,” Christ preached the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel Christ is to reign “over THE HOUSE OF JACOB for ever” (Luke 1:33): and he promised to his disciples positions of authority in that Kingdom when restored. In answer to Peter’s question, as to what should be the reward of the disciples who had followed him, Christ said: “Ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration, *when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory*, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, JUDGING THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL” (Matt. 19:28). In view of their promised rulership over the restored Kingdom of Israel, we find the disciples asking Christ, previous to his departure from the earth: “Lord, wilt thou at this time RESTORE AGAIN THE KINGDOM TO ISRAEL” (Acts 1:6). To which Christ replied that it was not for them to know *the times or the seasons* which the Father had put in His own power. In Acts 3:20, Peter associates its restoration with Christ’s second coming: “*He shall send Jesus Christ*, which before was preached unto you: which the heaven must receive UNTIL *the times of restitution* OF ALL THINGS WHICH GOD HATH SPOKEN BY THE MOUTH OF ALL HIS HOLY PROPHETS.” When that time comes, Christ will appear and “*raise up THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID* that is fallen, close up the breaches thereof; raise up its ruins, and BUILD IT AS IN THE DAYS OF OLD” (Amos 9:11). Before Christ can reign, this Kingdom must be re-established; and this important work he will do at his appearing.

The World for Christ

The great changes to take place in the earth at this period are referred to in the Apocalypse in the following words: “*The Kingdoms of this world are become THE KINGDOMS OF OUR LORD, AND OF HIS CHRIST; and He shall reign for ever and ever*” (Rev. 11:15). The present rulers cannot retain their position when Christ appears to rule the world. Their Kingdoms will be wrested from them, and the dominion and authority given to Christ alone; for, saith Zechariah: “*The Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be ONE LORD, and his name one*” (Zech. 14:9). There are now many Kings throughout the earth: but in that day the Lord shall be “King OVER ALL THE EARTH.”

“The City of the Great King”

Where shall this one King be enthroned? The answer has already been given: “At that time *they shall call Jerusalem THE THRONE OF THE LORD*” (Jer. 3:17). The city which witnessed the humiliation and the sufferings of Christ is destined to become the scene of his exaltation and glory. “*The Lord of Hosts shall reign IN MOUNT ZION, AND IN JERUSALEM, and before his ancients gloriously*” (Isa. 24:23). Recognizing the great future in store for that city - the “city of God,” which He has chosen, and loves—Christ forbade men to swear by it. “Swear not by Jerusalem,” he says, “for it is the CITY OF THE GREAT KING”; and, as such, it will ultimately be established and made “a praise in the earth” (Isa. 62:7).

“Out of Zion shall go forth the Law”

Referring to the position of this city in the last days, it is declared: “OUT OF ZION SHALL GO FORTH THE LAW, AND THE WORD OF THE LORD FROM JERUSALEM” (Isa. 2:3). Here, then, is a characteristic of the Millennium. No human law shall then govern the world - no longer shall men in every nation devise their laws according to their own

wisdom - but there shall be *one law for the whole earth* proceeding from the metropolis of the world. *“The law shall go forth from Zion.”* The earth will be in subjection to Christ, and quietly and submissively wait for his commands to go forth. *“The isles shall WAIT for his law”* (Isa. 42:4). That the law that proceeds from Zion will be in every respect a desirable one is manifest when we consider from whom it proceeds. Who is it that is enthroned there? Jesus, the Son of God—a King all-wise, omniscient and infallible; whose law must be characterized by the highest wisdom and righteousness; a King who knows the needs of the world - who has Himself *“drunk of the brook by the way,”* and who will, therefore, devise an unerring law most fitted for the wants of man, and effectual to secure their permanent well-being and good. The prophet Isaiah testifies as to the rule of Christ *“The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit of counsel and might; the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. And he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears; but with RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL HE JUDGE THE POOR, AND REPROVE WITH EQUITY FOR THE MEEK OF THE EARTH”* (Isa 11:2-4).

King, Priest, and Shepherd

We have but to reflect upon the character of the coming King to realize the blessings that will prevail under his rule. Not only is he all wise and unerring, but he is merciful and pitiful. He is one who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. His rule, therefore, will not be actuated by motives of selfishness, but will be framed for the benefit of those who need, and whose wants are neglected and unheeded by the rulers of the present age. The law of Christ will be one for the poor as well as the rich, and one adapted in all respects for every human being who is favored in so glorious an age.

A special characteristic of Christ's law will be its absolute perfection. The laws devised by man are weak and imperfect, and require continual reform and amendment; but "*the law of the Lord is PERFECT.*" there will be no defects in that law - it will require no amendment; but, being devised by Divine wisdom, it will go forth from Zion a *perfect law* for the obedience of the world.

"The Powers of The Age to Come"

Not only will Christ's rule be infallible but it will be omnipotent. The universal Monarch of the earth will have power to enforce the execution of his wise decrees. However beneficial the laws of man may be in their inception, they fail to secure the desired result. Owing to the difficulties connected with the administration of the law, and the inability of the rulers of the world to compel strict obedience even to laws that are righteous, evil continually triumphs, and wickedness abounds. The reflective stand appalled and dismayed at the evils of the situation, and the hopelessness of reformation by human agency. We need a Government with absolute power to compel righteousness and justice amongst men, and this is an especial feature in Christ's reign. "*He shall rule with A ROD OF IRON*" (Rev. 19:15). His government will be absolute and vigorous, firm and irresistible, enforcing obedience, and compelling submission. In vain will it be for the oppressor, the tyrant, the unrighteous, and the evil, to strive to evade his law. "*Every soul who will not hear him, shall be destroyed from among the people*" (Acts 3:23). An illustration of the power in Christ's hands to enforce obedience is seen in regard to the execution of one of the decrees that will go forth from Zion. All nations will be commanded to go up from year to year to Jerusalem, to worship the king in the glorious temple to be erected there, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. What if any refuse to comply? How will the King deal with them? In a very summary and effectual way. He will withhold the rain from their territory. "*It shall come to pass,*" says the prophet Zechariah, "*that whoso will not come up of all the families of*

the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, *even upon them shall be no rain*" (Zech. 14:17). Who will dare to resist a King whose authority prevails to such an extent as this—who has "all power in heaven and earth?"

Nations Flowing Unto Jerusalem

The Government of Christ will be recognized and appreciated by the nations as a whole, who will gladly comply with the command to pay their homage to the King who reigns in Mount Zion. "*All nations,*" says Isaiah, "*shall FLOW unto it.*" "Many people shall go and say, *Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people*" (Isa. 2:3-4). The nations will concur in his appointments; they will cheerfully submit, and flow in joyful crowds to the centre of the kingdom of Christ, rejoicing in the blessings that result from his rule. It will be said in that day "The extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land. And in mercy shall the throne be established, and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment and hasting righteousness" (Isa. 16:4-5).

HOPE FOR THE POOR AND NEEDY

The 72nd Psalm presents a glorious picture of his reign- a picture delightful to gaze upon. "He shall judge the poor of the people; he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor" (v. 4). The poor and helpless will then be cared for as they have never been before: the oppressor and the tyrant will be broken in pieces, the burdens under which men groan will be removed; the poverty and wretchedness that now fill the earth will be known no more; vice and evil of every kind will be restrained; and all the causes of

suffering and sorrow, which are the general characteristics of this dark day, will be uprooted. "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continue as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed" (Psa. 72:6, 17). A glance at this picture, and at the evils that now cover the earth, will help us to understand the reason why all nations will flow to the presence of the King who reigns in Salem's towers, and render worship and praise to the God of the whole earth.

"He Maketh Wars to Cease"

One great characteristic of the reign of Christ will be the entire absence of war and strife amongst men. He is called the "prince of peace." It is testified that he shall "*speak peace to the nations*" (Zech. 9:10). War will continue - the battle will rage - *until* the prince of peace comes to establish peace. All human efforts are unable to effect this desired result. In spite of our abhorrence to war - in spite of the advance of knowledge and the strides of civilization - we have continually the melancholy spectacle of mankind in deadly conflict, the lives of thousands sacrificed in settling the disputes of the, rulers of the present order of things. Christ will speedily end this unhappy state of affairs; his power will be manifested in the termination of strife and bloodshed, the destruction of weapons of war, and the establishment for a thousand years of perfect peace and freedom from war. This is declared to be the effect of Christ's rule. "He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: *and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. NATION SHALL NOT LIFT UP SWORD AGAINST NATION, neither shall they learn war any more*" (Isa. 2:4). The same is predicted through the prophet Hosea: "I will break the bow, and the sword and the battle OUT OF THE EARTH" (Hosea 2:18). A consideration of the state of things here foretold brings before our minds a glorious picture. No strife upon the earth, men everywhere dwelling in

peace and unity, converting their weapons, no longer needed to slay their fellow men, into implements for the peaceful pursuits of agriculture; no longer the din and crash of war, for *“nation shall not lift up sword against nation”*, but *“the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever.”* (Isa. 32:17). And the statement follows: *“Neither shall they LEARN WAR ANY MORE.”*

International Repentance and Conversion

Another characteristic of the Millennium will be the enlightenment of all the nations and the education of the peoples in ways of righteousness. In connection with the Government of Mount Zion, it is recorded that many people shall go and say, *“Come ye, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; AND HE WILL TEACH US OF HIS WAYS, AND WE WILL WALK IN HIS PATHS”* (Isa. 2:3). The same fact is brought out in Jer. 3:17. Referring to the time when Jerusalem has become *“the throne of the Lord,”* we are told that *“all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem.”* The result, of their gathering there follows in the same verse: they shall not *“walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.”* Here, then, is a result of Christ’s reign- the regeneration of the world- which could never be effected by human agency. In spite of the spread of knowledge in these favored days, how little is its effect on mankind generally! How true is it still that *“the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty!”* (Ps. 74:20). The spread of knowledge does not secure the improvement of the world. Righteousness and holiness do not increase with the advance of knowledge, and all the influences which are exerted in this direction have but little effect in spreading righteousness, so far as the mass of the inhabitants of the earth are concerned. We are living in an evil age- an age of unbelief and skepticism, and to all human appearance, mankind are drifting further and further away from a condition of righteousness

into a condition characterized by persistent neglect of the Scriptures, and of the commands of God. The situation appears all the more appalling when it is realized that the religious world itself is in a state of apostasy. The doctrines, which are generally held are not founded upon the word of God, but are the inventions of men of corrupt minds who have erred concerning the faith- doctrines which are destructive of “the truth as it is in Jesus,” These have so beclouded the minds of men that the light is not perceived by them; a “veil” of darkness is upon the peoples; they are under “strong delusion,” believing a lie. So deeply rooted in this departure from the truth that all human efforts are vain to remedy it, and the outlook would be gloomy indeed if it were not for the promise of Christ’s coming.

All Nations of One Religion

Referring to the time when Christ shall, reign on Mount Zion, it is declared by the prophet Isaiah (ch. 25:7): “He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.” The work to be done by Christ and his saints will have the effect of removing the darkness that now covers the earth, and enlightening all the nations, and the result will eventually be that the peoples of the earth will no longer walk in the vanity of their minds, but, being enlightened by infallible teachers in the truth of God, mankind universally will walk and rejoice in it. After the gathering of the nations and the outpouring of God’s indignation, then, says Jehovah, “will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, *to serve Him with one consent*” (Zeph. 3:9). There will come a time upon the earth when it will not be necessary for man to say to his brother: “Know the Lord; for they shall *all know him from the least unto the greatest*” (Jer. 31:34)—the “earth shall be *full of the knowledge of the Lord*, as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:9); and God’s will shall “be done on the earth as it is in heaven.”

“Then shall the Earth Yield Her Increase”

In order to further the well being of the peoples of the earth during this coming Millennium of blessedness, the very earth itself is to undergo a marvelous change at the hands of Christ. The earth, on account of sin, is now subject to the curse pronounced in the Garden of Eden: *“Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee”* (Gen. 3:17). The consequence of this cursed condition of the ground is that toil and arduous labor are necessary to cause it to bring forth its fruits for the sustenance of man. *“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,”* declares the Creator to Adam (in v. 19); and such has been the lot of mankind from the day the first man and woman were expelled from the Garden of Eden, where life had been continuous pleasure and ease. So accustomed has man become to this cursed condition of the soil, that it is regarded as its natural characteristic. The Scriptures show us, however, that it is a mere temporary feature, to disappear with the removal of the curse. Speaking of the time when God, through Christ, will *“judge the people righteously and govern the nations upon earth,”* the Psalmist declares: *“THEN shall the earth YIELD HER INCREASE”* (Ps. 67:6).

Palestine a Paradise

One of the promises to the children of Israel, conditional on their obedience, was that their land should be specially productive, and yield its fruits in such profusion that there should be no want amongst them. The removal of the curse will have this effect throughout the earth. The prophet Amos, referring to that day when the tabernacle of David is restored *“as in the days of old,”* declares, by the word of God, that the days shall come that *“the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed”* (Amos 9:13). That is to say, that the earth will yield in such profusion that the people will not be able to gather its fruits before the time again comes round for plowing and

sowing seed. Another promise to the like effect is given in Ezekiel 36:29: "I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you, and I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field." Here is a wondrous fertility of the ground predicted; and further than this, the waste places of the earth shall then be utilized; the vast deserts and sterile tracts of land, which are apparently useless, will then be transformed into fertile plains, no longer yielding the thorn and brier, but abounding with vegetation for the use of man, and blossoming with the flowers of the field. *"Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree"* (Isa. 55:13). *"I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah-tree, and the myrtle, and the oil-tree; I will set in the desert the fir-tree, and the pine, and the box-tree together"* (Isa. 41:19). *"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, AND BLOSSOM AS THE ROSE"* (Isa. 35:1)

This marvelous change will be a source of blessing to the inhabitants of the earth. Instead of having to give up their lives to arduous toil, merely to procure the necessities of life, and with but little opportunity of participating in the enjoyment of the blessings, which are even now so profusely showered upon mankind by the Father of Mercies, under this favored condition of things work will be a pleasure, plenty will be secured for all, poverty and want will not exist, and every human being will be enabled to enjoy the bounties and the pleasures of the earth. The riches of the world, instead of being confined to the few, will be open to all, and life will be a matter of pleasure and rejoicing, instead of incessant toil and weariness.

Eating and Drinking in The Kingdom

The conceptions of the religious world are in this, as in many other particulars, entirely in opposition to the Word of God. Even as regards the immortal brethren and sisters of Christ, the promise is given that they

shall “EAT AND DRINK *at his table in his Kingdom*” (Luke 22:30; Luke 14:15). Christ, in instituting the memorial feast of bread and wine, declared to his disciples that from thenceforth he would not drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when he would *drink it new with them in his Kingdom* (Matt. 26:29). But apart from this, which has reference to the immortal rulers of the world, the *subjects* of the Kingdom will for a thousand years consist of *mortal beings*, who will carry on their avocations as now, but under more favored conditions. “*They shall BUILD HOUSES, and inhabit them, and they shall PLANT VINEYARDS, and eat the fruit of them... They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble*” (Isa. 65:21,23). “*They shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, FOR WHEAT, AND FOR WINE, AND FOR OIL, AND FOR THE YOUNG OF THE FLOCK AND OF THE HERD; and their soul shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not sorrow any more at all*” (Jer. 31:12).

The New Heavens and New Earth

All this will have the effect of transforming this world of sorrow into a world of rejoicing and joy. “Be ye glad,” says Jehovah, “and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing; and her people a joy; and I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; *and the voice of weeping SHALL BE NO MORE HEARD IN HER, nor the voice of crying*” (Isa. 65:18). There is a time coming when sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Christ’s rule will eradicate the causes of sorrow; and that which is declared concerning Jerusalem and her people will ultimately be applicable to the whole world. Evil and suffering come as the result of sin. When sin is restrained, and righteousness prevails, blessing will follow. With the “Great Physician” on the earth, and his immortal associates in possession of those powers which were displayed in Apostolic days, disease and sickness, with their consequent suffering, will not abound. “*The inhabitant shall not say Jam sick*” (Isa. 33:24). The children of Israel were blessed, when obedient,

with freedom from sickness and disease; and so will it be in the coming day. Man is impotent to stay the progress of disease, but the omnipotent King of the World will display his power in removing the causes of sickness among the peoples, and causing them to walk in such ways as will tend to their individual good. No longer will the poor be herded together in unsanitary dwellings; no longer will vice spread its fearful effects amongst mankind, nor want of food or shelter carry off its victims. All that will tend to promote health and longevity will prevail, and all that tends in a contrary direction be removed. Instead of all creation groaning in pain under its many burdens, as now, all mankind will rejoice in the deliverance effected by Christ, and there will be songs instead of sighing—the “garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.”

Long Life and Blessedness

But this is not all. The power of God will be exercised in the extension of the life of man. In our present cursed condition, death comes in many cases as a relief to terminate a life of sorrow, and the burden of the infirmities of age; but with perfect health and every blessing, long life would be desirable indeed. The present short tenure of life has not always been the lot of man. Early in the history of the world men reckoned their lives by *hundreds* instead of *tens*, and so shall it be again. The Spirit of God, through the prophet Isaiah, declares: “*There shall be no more thence an INFANT OF DAYS, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die a hundred years old; but the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed. And they, shall build houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat: for AS THE DAYS OF A TREE are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands*” (Isa. 65:20-22). Mortality will not prevail then as now those who die a hundred years of age will be esteemed as but children: men will live out their days, and not be cut off in youth except in the case of a sinner, who shall “die a

hundred years old." By reason of their longevity, they will be enabled to occupy the houses they build, and partake of the fruit of the vineyards they plant. In former years death had prevented them from so doing, but during this glorious period their days shall be "*as the days of a tree.*" Trees in many cases flourish for centuries, and so shall it be with mankind; life will be extended, as in ancient days, to hundreds of years, and "they shall long enjoy"- or, as the margin reads, "WEAR OUT"- the very work of their hands. Here, then, is another blessing of the Millennium. Long life, with freedom from disease and suffering- a life surrounded with the highest and choicest blessings and enjoyments.

The Earth Filled with God's Glory

Even the very animals are to be transformed and brought into harmony with the rest of the creation. Their savage nature is to be tamed, and the enmity existing between them and man removed, and all creation brought into that state of peace and friendship which once existed in Eden. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11: 6-9).

It is impossible adequately to portray the blessedness that will be realized when Christ reigns. Words fail to set forth the glories of his Kingdom. All the good the heart can desire, or the mind can conceive, will be the portion of his people, and of the privileged subjects of his rule. It is summed up in the promises that "ALL NATIONS SHALL BE

BLESSED IN HIM;” and that, as truly as God exists, the “EARTH SHALL BE FILLED WITH HIS GLORY” (Num. 14:21).

“Then Cometh the End”

The thousand years’ reign of Christ is not, however, the end of God’s purpose with the earth. That reign is simply a means to an end- the means adopted by God to carry out His final purpose with the earth and man upon it. The Kingdom of God does not terminate at the end of a thousand years. Of Christ’s Kingdom *“there shall be NO END”* (Luke 1:33). The Kingdom has its work: to remove all enemies and to bring the world to God. Christ is to rule *“in the midst of his enemies”* (Psa. 110:2). *“He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet”* (1 Cor. 15:25). Those enemies are not merely personal, for death is spoken of as *“the last enemy”* to be destroyed. Christ will destroy *all evil* in whatever form it may be manifested; all the wicked shall ultimately be destroyed, and sin, with all its effects, including at last death itself will finally be no more. *“Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power... And when all things shall be subdued unto Him then shall the Son also himself be subject unto Him that put all things under him, THAT GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL”* (1 Cor. 15:24-28). The purpose of God with the earth will then be accomplished. The earth will be redeemed from all evil; all its occupants will be immortal, righteous, glorified beings, like unto Christ, who, with him, will for ever inherit the earth, all its blessings at their disposal—a multitude of happy, undying creatures in communion with their God, before whom will be unending days of inconceivable joy and blessing.

“He That Overcometh Shall Inherit All Things”

The Gospel of the Kingdom comes to us that we may be saved from sin and death, attain unto immortality, and inherit the blessings promised. God asks our faith in what He has declared, and in evidence of our faith

He asks obedience. "HE THAT BELIEVETH AND IS BAPTISED SHALL BE SAVED." (Mark 16:15-16) If we would be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, here are the conditions. Manifest belief in the good news of the Kingdom of God; yield obedience to the command to be baptized for the remission of sins; and, thenceforth walk in patient continuance in well doing (See Rom. 2:6). If such is our position, then the day of Christ will assuredly bring us glory, honor, immortality, association with Christ, in His reign on earth, and the possession of joy unspeakable for evermore.

