

# The Millennial Reign of Christ, and the universal blessing of the earth, connected with the restoration of the Jews.

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*Psalm 72.*

*Lecture 4 of 'Eight Lectures on Prophecy' from shorthand notes.*

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I would address myself, in the first place, this evening to the examination of a popular notion connected with our subject, which I hope to be enabled to show you is nothing more than a popular error. It is one, however, that greatly tends to mislead the minds of many respecting the whole class of subjects into which we are now inquiring. It refers to the meaning of the two expressions — "the day of judgment," and "the day of the Lord." It must be obvious that these two expressions are of the same import — that they both refer to the same period. If there were any doubt on the subject, it would be removed by referring to 2 Peter 3. There we find the apostle, or rather the Holy Ghost by him, using these two expressions as identical in their meaning. Having spoken of the heavens and the earth which were before the flood, and of their destruction by water, he thus proceeds: "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." (verse 7.) "The day of judgment," then, is the period in which the heavens and the earth are destroyed by fire. So far the popular idea is correct. Look now to verse 10, and you will see that the apostle uses the expression, "The day of the Lord," to denote the same period. "But 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." Clearly it is of one period he speaks in both verses; designating it in one "the day of judgment," and in the other, "the day of the Lord." Now what is the idea attached by Christians generally to these expressions? Is it not that of a literal actual day of twelve or four-and-twenty hours? And it is supposed that this literal day is at the end of time, at the final dissolution of all things, at the close of the millennium, when the Son shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and God shall be all in all. An examination of Scripture, as I judge, will show that this is a mistake. "The day of the Lord" and "the day of judgment" both imply a lengthened period; not, as people imagine, an actual day of twenty-four hours. And let me remind you that we are in the constant use of the word "day" in such a sense as this. You hear men speak of "the day of despotism," and "the day of liberty;" "the day of ignorant barbarism," and "the day of enlightened civilization." Do they mean by these expressions a literal day of twenty-four hours? So when we speak of "Paul's day," "Caesar's day," "Luther's day," "Wesley's

day, "Napoleon's day" — we do not mean a day of twenty-four hours, but the period during which the person named lived and acted; and when we thus speak, it is because we deem the person to have been one of such prominence as to give a character to the period in which he lived. And this is almost as common a use of the word "day" in our language, as well as in the language of Scripture, as its application to a period of twelve or four-and-twenty hours. In Scripture we read of the day of temptation, the day of trouble, the day of prosperity, the day of adversity, the day of visitation, the day of vengeance, the day of salvation; and I know not how many instances besides we have, of expressions in which the word "day" is similarly used. Take the last named, "the day of salvation," — how long has it lasted? Full eighteen hundred years, at all events, and more than that. And for anything the word "day" proves to the contrary, "the day of judgment" may last as long as the day of salvation has lasted already. The fact is, that it is a lengthened period characterized by these two features among others; viz., *judgment*, and *the presence of the Lord*, and therefore it is termed "the day of judgment" and "the day of the Lord." Nor have I any doubt myself that it is termed "the day of judgment," in contrast with "the day of salvation;" "the day of the Lord" in contrast with "man's day," — an expression which you will find in the margin of 1 Cor. 4: 3: "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment;" in the margin, "man's day." He proceeds: "But he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God." "Man's day" is the long dreary period in which man judgeth by the sight of his eyes and the hearing of his ears. Deceived by Satan and his own heart, he has come to false conclusions on almost every subject; and acting on these false conclusions, these partial and erroneous judgments, he has filled the earth with violence, misery, and wrong. "The day of the Lord" is the period in which he shall rule, of whom we read, "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 of 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.) The character of his judgments, and the effects of his reign, are described to us in the beautiful Psalm we have read.

Before leaving this point I would remark, that this solemn, blessed period is ushered in and closed by *special acts of judgment*. To see this is very important to the clearing up of Scripture on these subjects. It is ushered in by those judgments which desolate the earth at the coming of the Lord. It is closed by the judgment, before the great white throne, of the dead who had not been raised at the commencement of the thousand years. And it is then, at the close, that the earth and the heaven flee away. Peter says, "But 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." *In the which*. He does not say in what part of the day, whether at its dawn, or at its close. He gives us no information as to this. But we know well from Rev 20, which describes to us the whole period, and tells us that it lasts a thousand years, that it is at the evening, the close of the day, that this takes place. just as at the dawn, the morning of the day, the righteous dead are raised to live and reign with Christ throughout the period of the thousand years; so at its close the wicked dead, "the rest of the dead, who lived not again till the thousand years were finished," are raised from their graves, and judged before the great white throne. And it is then that the heaven and the

earth pass away, and new heavens and a new earth are created in their stead. Well may the millennium be termed "the day of judgment," when it is ushered in by the judgments which attend the coming of the Lord; characterized by his righteous though peaceful rule throughout; and terminated by the judgment of the great white throne.

Let us now turn to Zech. 14. We shall see there that "the day of the Lord" is not a literal day of twenty-four hours; that it is identical with his reign as king over all the earth; and that this is inseparably connected with what we were considering a few evenings since — the restoration of the Jews. "Behold the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle." Here we have the commencement of the day, when in the extremity of Jerusalem's final sorrows, the Lord goes forth to fight against her enemies. Now mark the recurrences in this chapter of the expression, "that day." *What day it is* we have just seen. "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives," etc. "And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. And it shall come to pass in *that day*, that the light shall not be clear nor dark: but it shall be one day, which shall be known to the Lord, not day nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light." We are thus told expressly, that it is not an ordinary, natural day. It is distinguished from this by two marks. First, "the light shall not be clear nor dark," which the translators seem to have very properly explained in the margin thus, "that is, it shall not be clear in some places and dark in other places of the world," the light will be equally diffused. Secondly, "at evening time it shall be light." Instead of the light diminishing as the day declines, as in the natural day, the light shall be unabated to the last. At evening time it shall be light. To proceed: "And it shall be in *that day*, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be." So that the "day" is of such continuance, that at least it embraces summer and winter. But what follows? "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in *that day* shall there be one Lord, and his name one." Is it not plain from this passage that "the day of the Lord" includes the whole blessed period of the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ? It is his coming that brings, his reign that constitutes, the day.

The chapter then speaks of physical changes which are to take place in the land. "All the land shall be turned into a plain," etc. "And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited." Speaking of the judgments that shall fall on those who have been assembled against Jerusalem, it says, "And it shall come to pass in *that day*, that a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them," etc. "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." "In *that day*" (the *day* of which we have heard throughout the chapter — the *day* of which it can be said, "in summer and in winter shall it be!" "from year to year" — the day in which "the Lord shall be king over all the earth" — in *that day*) "shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD: and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts; and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in *that day* there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts." Will you turn to this chapter, my brethren,

in your closets and read it there attentively, with prayer to the Lord? You can thus hardly fail to see that it places the whole matter in so clear a light, that if there was not another chapter in the Bible on the subject, we should have no excuse for being under any serious mistake respecting it.

Let us pass on to consider Isa. 2 "The word that Isaiah the Son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow

unto it. And 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." (ver. 1~3.) No doubt we have all often heard this passage quoted at missionary meetings, and on other similar occasions: quoted in connection with the subject of the spread of the gospel. But however important missions and the spread of the gospel may be (and God forbid that I should undervalue them for a moment), they are not the subject, nor are they in any way connected with the subject, of the passage before us. The passage before us records "the word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw *concerning Judah and Jerusalem.*" Judah and Jerusalem are the subject, not the Church and its missions. "Out of Zion," not out of the Church, "shall go forth the law: and the word of the Lord," not from Britain, but "from Jerusalem." We have got wise in our own conceits, my brethren, and supposed that to us was entrusted the work of introducing by our labours, the blessedness of the millennial state. This is a work not associated with our calling, but with that of Israel. Ours is really a far higher calling — a heavenly one; a calling above earthly things and earthly scenes altogether. Forgetting this, and seeking a place on earth, we have sought to assume the place assigned of God to Israel. We have not had faith for our own place in the heavenlies with Christ, and having come down to earth, we have aspired to that place on earth assigned in the counsels of God to Israel. Israel's place we cannot fill, however we may attempt it; and in attempting it we deny our heavenly calling altogether. But more of this when we come to consider the distinct calling and glory of the Church. It is out of *Zion* the law shall go forth, and the word of the Lord from *Jerusalem.*

"And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people." Is this the gradual, peaceful spread of truth by human instrumentality? "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." (ver. 4.) Ps. 46 connects itself with the prospect of universal peace here held out, and we will turn aside to consider it for a moment. People say that it is not only by the spread of the gospel that this prospect is to be realized, but by peace societies and other confederations to spread pacific principles, and to promote among the governments of the earth pacific counsels and measures. But is this what the Word of God testifies? Look at this Psalm. It relates to a time of tremendous trouble, the period we were considering in a former lecture, the time of Jacob's trouble, out of which he is to be delivered. This Psalm expresses the confidence of the faithful Jewish remnant, while surrounded by the horrors of that day of unequalled tribulation, and of the judgments with which it terminates. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." (ver. 1-3.) This is surely

most unlike the gradual spread of truth, and the conversion, by its imperceptible influences, of the whole mass of mankind to holiness and peace. Convulsions are here described of a character the most formidable. "The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted." (ver. 6.) Again do the remnant declare their confidence amid the desolating storm. "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." (ver. 7.) And now the storm is past. God has arisen to his strange

work; and his judgments having been accomplished, we are invited to contemplate the results. "Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth. HE *maketh wars to cease* unto the end of the earth; HE breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder: HE burneth the chariot in the fire." It is not the slow and gradual progress of peaceful principles, but God's solemn interposition in judgment at the coming of the Lord, that puts an end to the strifes and wars which have for so many ages desolated the earth, and that introduces the period of universal peace. And what is the moral drawn from all this by the Holy Ghost? Is it, "exert yourselves — put forth all your energies — labour with all your might to impregnate society with principles which will introduce the golden age of universal concord, and harmony, and peace" — is this, I ask, the moral drawn by the Spirit from this solemn prophetic history? No, my brethren, it is this: "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth." (ver. 10.) It is by *his* power — not by human energy; to *his* glory — not to the exaltation of proud, vaunting man — that these wonders are accomplished.

Let us now turn again to Isaiah 2. Solemn words of warning and exhortation follow those already quoted; and then, from verse 10, we have a magnificent view of the "day of the Lord;" a view corresponding exactly with what we have seen in Zech. 14, and supplying further instruction not communicated there. Verse 10 is an invitation to all who have ears to hear, to enter where the remnant whose voice we have been hearing in Psalm 46 are hid during the convulsions and terrors of that day. "Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low." Every thing that has ministered to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life — every thing that men have delighted in, so as to shut out God and exclude Christ from their hearts — every thing that has contributed to the self-exaltation that has characterized man throughout — which increasingly characterizes him now — which characterizes this day in which we live, to an extent fearful to contemplate — the day of the Lord shall be upon all that. Think, my brethren, of what the pride of man's heart is doing at this very moment, in concentrating the wealth and energies of all nations in making one grand display to all the world of what man's skill and energy can effect!\* The day of the Lord shall be "upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." May these serious words sink into our hearts. To read on: "And the idols he shall utterly abolish. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty." When, my

brethren? When the gospel has spread universally? When Christianity and civilization are everywhere diffused? When the truth has won a peaceful and universal triumph? Ah! this passage is often in part quoted, as though this were the doctrine taught in it. But *when is it* that idolatry ceases? "WHEN HE ARISETH TO SHAKE TERRIBLY THE EARTH." Yes, "In that day, man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made, each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, WHEN HE ARISETH TO SHAKE TERRIBLY THE EARTH." And the moral here is of the same import as in Psalm 46. Here it is negative; there positive. Here it is, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" He may account much of himself, as, alas! he does. He may boast much of his powers, so varied and so ample as he considers them to be. He may improve them by all the inventions and appliances of art, and multiply them by combination to any extent he pleases. God has but to arise, and all his glories fade away as a leaf. God has but to interpose, and all that man has boasted of and gloried in withers at once. May our hearts remember this. Truth like this is needed at all times; but in this day of man's loudest boastings and loftiest pretensions, it is surely of all importance that these two words, "Cease ye from man" — "Be still and know that I am God" — should be ever present to our souls.

\*This refers to "The Great Exhibition" of London, 1851 which was in preparation when these lectures were delivered.

The views of prophecy which so widely prevail in the present day confound with each other two periods, as entirely contrasted in their *character*, as they are distinguished from each other by the fact that one commences after the other has closed. Most Christians suppose that by the preaching of the gospel, and the increased outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Christianity will gradually spread — the nations of the earth be gradually subdued by its influence — till at last all men become Christians; and, that the world having thus become Christians, it will remain so for a great length of time. And this universal prevalence of Christianity which they anticipate is what they understand by the millennium. But not only is this idea not founded on Scripture — not only is it contrary to all the plain Scriptures by which it was proved to you a week ago that there can be no millennium till the return of the Lord Jesus Christ — it is based on a complete misapprehension as to what the character of the present period is, as well as the character of the next, the millennial age. They stand in direct contrast with each other. What is the character of God's present dealings with mankind? *Grace*, unmingled *grace*. This is the period of God's long-suffering, the day of salvation. God is not now *openly* acting as the righteous Governor of the world, distributing good and evil according to the character of men's ways. Every body sees this, and infidels try to prove thereby, either that there is no God, or that he takes no concern in human affairs. Whence all the unrequited treachery and rapine, and oppression and blood, which make the head giddy and the heart sick to contemplate, if God be now rewarding people according to their works? — if, in other words, he be now openly governing the world in righteousness?

Ah! but there is a "day of judgment" coming. Not a period of twelve, or four-and-twenty hours, but of a thousand years, throughout which the world's government, administered by the Son of Man himself, shall be of such a character as to clear up all that is now obscure, and fully vindicate and manifest the glory of God. God having got for himself a name by all the grace

manifested throughout the present period, and by the results flowing from it to all eternity, he will in the next dispensation — in the millennial age, manifest his character as the righteous Lord who loveth righteousness." Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment." (Isaiah 32: 1)

Am I denying, then, that God does at present by his providence secretly and effectually control all things? God forbid. Even Satan himself is in that sense subject to him, accomplishing his purposes, and doing his will. But I speak of the open, public, manifest government of the world. Is that conducted on the principle of righteous retribution and reward, or is it not? There can be but one answer. No doubt, man's evil and Satan's malice are kept in check by the secret restraints of God's providence, as well as by the institution of human government and laws which he has appointed, and until now upheld. If it were not so, men would destroy each other till the earth would be depopulated. But still, where is the person who can imagine that there is at present, or has ever been since the fall, a distribution of temporal good and evil, according to men's character and conduct, so as to be an adequate witness to God's character of holiness, benevolence, and rectitude, as the righteous judge and Governor of the world? Why the fact is, that goodness has been allowed to be so oppressed and trodden under foot, and evil has been allowed to be so rampant and triumphant, that when the blessed One himself, the perfect, the sinless One was here, HE was put to death! We know why this was permitted. But I want you to consider the fact — it was permitted. Yes, God looked down from heaven and witnessed the murder, by man's wicked hands, of his only-begotten, well-beloved Son!

What a contrast was that scene to what the Psalmist anticipates, looking onwards to the millennial reign. "For the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance: but judgment shall return unto righteousness; and all the upright in heart shall follow it." (Psalm 94: 14, 15.) Long have judgment and righteousness been separated. *judgment* was in the hands of Pilate who sate on the judgment-seat. *Righteousness*, perfect righteousness. human as well as divine, stood before him in the person of the blameless victim, of whose innocence he declared his conviction by vainly washing his hands, while he yet gave him up to be crucified! And God looked down on that scene, and has borne for eighteen hundred years with the world that was defiled by it! And could we expect him to avenge any lesser wrongs while that greatest crime of all continues unavenged? Unavenged, did I say? Did I speak of God bearing with the world? How far short of the truth this is! He took occasion from that crowning act of men's hatred and wickedness, to display to us all the depths and fulness of his own love. He sent his Spirit to testify that the blood shed *by* man on earth was accepted *for* man in heaven; that even those who actually shed it, if they did but take refuge in it for eternity, should find it a sure hiding-place. And what has God been doing ever since, but proclaiming to the whole world — Jews as well as Gentiles, and Gentiles as well as Jews — that all who believe on Jesus become united to him, fellow-heirs with him of the glory yet to be revealed. And surely this is not judgment, but mercy; not righteous government, but infinite grace. And what has been the effect where this testimony has been believed? Why, that those who have believed it have shared the treatment which their Lord received at the hands of men. And has God avenged their blood? No, the blood of Christ's martyrs, as well as of Christ himself, remains unavenged. And God suffers the world to pursue its wicked course, treasuring up wrath to itself against the day of wrath, while his patience still waits, and his long-suffering still lingers, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Such is the character of this present period — this day of salvation. But how does it act upon men's souls? what effect does it produce? A few indeed are gathered out from the world by almighty grace to believe in Jesus, and confess him, and suffer for his name's sake. There have been a few such in each succeeding century and generation. But what is the effect upon the mass? Hear it in the words of God himself — "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." (Ecc. 8: 11) All this patience and forbearance and grace of our God have just the effect of emboldening men in iniquity. How, then, is a dispensation of which perfect grace is the characteristic to bring in universal blessing? It is not to be expected. Isaiah 26: 10, bears just the same testimony. "Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord." So that, however long the patience of God might wait, and his present dealings with mankind be continued, it is evident that the result would never be what men suppose. The world would never be converted, the millennium would never be introduced. It is by judgments that God will bring this about. "Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see." That is, as long as it is lifted up in mercy, they will not see. "But they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at thy people: yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them." (verse 11.) So also in verse 9: "For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." We have thus the express declaration that favour, grace, will not do; men abuse it, to the hardening of themselves in iniquity; their heart is fully set in them to do evil. Then there is the equally express declaration that when God's judgments are in the earth, men will learn righteousness. *Grace* does not accomplish their subjection: *judgment* shall and will accomplish it.

Scripture testimony to this truth is uniform and abundant. At so early a period as the days of Eli and Samuel, Hannah the prophetess sings: "The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed." (1 Sam. 2: 10.) The last words of David are: "The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God; and he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springeth out of the earth by clear shining after rain." He owns that his house is not so with God; yet comforts himself with the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: and then says, "But the sons of Belial shall all of them be as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands: but the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron, and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place." (2 Sam. 23: 3-7.) The second Psalm is also very full and clear as to this. The confederated kings and their people are represented as saying of Jehovah and his anointed, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." How is their impiety to be rewarded? "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." To this king, thus to be established on Zion, in spite of all opposition, Jehovah says, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." I dare say you have all heard this text quoted at missionary meetings, to prove that all nations will be converted by the Gospel. But is this its meaning? How does Christ take possession of the inheritance thus assigned to him? Read the next verse. "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron: thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (verse 9.) They are not given to him, as people suppose, by the gradual,

gentle diffusion of Gospel truth; men's hearts and ways being moulded thereby till the world becomes a holy and happy world. No; at a certain definite moment yet to come. a moment for which Christ is waiting, ("expecting till his enemies be made his footstool,") the heathen shall be given to him for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. And he will take possession by breaking his enemies with a rod of iron; dashing them in pieces as a potter's vessel. It is thus by judgment, not by the extension of the present economy of perfect, unmingled grace, that millennial blessedness will be introduced.

One other passage, closely connected with what we have been considering, I would now refer you to. It is Psalm 110. "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand," — how long? — "until I make thine enemies thy footstool." What follows then? "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion; rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." While these enemies are crushed by the rod of his strength, his iron rod, there will be those, as we have already seen, who will be made ready to welcome him when he comes. His people, his nation, to whom he came eighteen hundred years ago, will be made willing to receive him at last. "He came to his own," but coming in humiliation, "his own received him not." So far from receiving, they crucified him; and he submitted to this — he suffered it to be so: "he was crucified through weakness." But when he comes again, it will be in power and glory. And to him it is said here — "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth." And how will he deal with those that gather against him, and against his willing people then? "The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of thy wrath. He shall judge among the heathen; he shall fill the places with dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries." Yes, my brethren, it is by judgments — desolating, destroying judgments, that Christ will, at the commencement of his reign, cut off the wicked. Even as we read in the New Testament — "The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. 13: 41, 42.) The survivors, awed by those judgments — the Spirit, moreover, being poured out upon all flesh — the whole world will own the supremacy of Jesus, and be made happy under his sway: as we read at the beginning this evening, "He shall judge the poor of the people; he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor . . . . He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him, and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts — yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him . . . . His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed."

Then there is another point. Suppose the times we have been anticipating had arrived. Suppose the church had been caught up to be in glory with her Lord, and Israel, again in their own land, had gone through their last dreadful tribulation. Suppose that the Gentile oppressors of Israel, when just ready to swallow them up, had been destroyed by the coming of the Lord, attended by his church, in glory — the coming of the Lord and all saints with him; — suppose multitudes of the wicked of all nations destroyed, and the whole nation of Israel re-settled in their own land; — suppose this whole nation, and all the survivors among all Gentiles, converted by the out-pouring of the Spirit upon all flesh — suppose all this, I say, — what should hinder the inhabitants of the earth corrupting themselves as men have always done? What should hinder

them relapsing into all the sin, and bringing upon themselves afresh all the sorrow, of which the world will then have been completely rid? Man was innocent and happy; but he fell. The world was once desolated by judgment, and re-peopled by the eight persons who descended from the ark. But how soon they corrupted themselves afresh? Israel has once been redeemed by the mighty hand and out-stretched arm of God; but what a history of backsliding and sin succeeded that deliverance! David's reign and Solomon's were happy days for Israel. The one subdued their enemies; the other reigned over them in peace, and built that magnificent temple in which God was known and worshipped. But the revolt under Rehoboam, and all the dark history of both nations till the captivity, was what ensued. The church was formed at Pentecost, and bright and lovely were the fruits of the indwelling Spirit, which for a season were exhibited. But how short that season! And how dismal the history of the corruption and degeneracy which have followed! And why not immediate failure and continued apostasy in the millennial age, as in all preceding ages? There are two answers to this question. Had there been no answer but that God has so willed it, and made known his will, this for faith would have been sufficient. But he has condescended to explain to us how it is. In the first place, Satan, who has wrought all the mischief hitherto, will be bound, and will be allowed to do no more till the thousand years are finished. It was Satan who deceived our first parents in Eden. It was Satan who corrupted the world after the flood. It was Satan who was Israel's great enemy, withstanding the purposes of God concerning them; and beguiling them when he could not shake these purposes. It was Satan who sowed tares among the good seed that the Son of Man had sown: and all the evils which pollute and afflict the church are but the crop which his seed has produced. But in the millennium Satan will be bound. Revelation 20 is explicit as to this. Figurative language is used there, I grant you. But what is denoted by the figure of a great chain and a key, and a mighty angel using them to bind Satan in the bottomless pit for a thousand years? Has the language no meaning because it is figurative language? No words could more clearly express the forcible restraint under which Satan, the great deceiver and usurper, will be placed during the millennial reign. "A liar, and the father of it;" and "a murderer from the beginning, who abode not in the truth," are the characters given to him in Scripture. And what could be expected from the reign of such an one for all these thousands of years, but the dire results which have actually followed? But he will be bound, so that he shall deceive the nations no more till the thousand years are fulfilled. Then, secondly, the place hitherto filled by Satan and his angels for purposes of evil, will, throughout the millennium, be filled by Christ and his glorified saints for purposes of blessing; and the reign of Christ will be a reign of righteousness throughout. It not only begins with desolating, destroying judgments, taking away the obstinately wicked, while the Spirit of God bows the hearts of those who survive, and makes them submissive to Christ's yoke: it is a reign of righteousness from first to last. Is it meant by this that there is no goodness, no grace? Surely not. It is full of grace, full of goodness. What can it be but grace that makes the nation which crucified Christ, yea, the very city where his blood was shed, the centre of blessing to the whole earth? What can be such a triumph of grace as this? And surely it is grace that will bow the hearts of the Gentiles, and bring them to realize, under the reign of Jesus, the fulfilment of that word to Abraham, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." But here is the difference. Grace introduces believers into blessing now — blessing of a far higher order than that of the saved population of the millennial earth. But while it does this, it leaves us for the present in a world where Satan rules, where wickedness is allowed to prosper, and where the present result of faithfulness to God is found in losses and sufferings and privations of all kinds. But in the millennium, not only will Satan be bound, and Christ be reigning with his glorified

saints, but evil, wherever it may appear, will be at once repressed by power. Grace, sovereign grace, will surely be manifested in bringing the spared and saved remnants of Jews and Gentiles into blessing, at the commencement of the thousand years. But the happiness into which they and their offspring are thus introduced by grace, will be guarded and maintained by the sceptre of righteous rule. It will not then be one sinner destroying much good, the tares and the wheat growing together until harvest. Human nature will indeed be human nature still: and though there will be no temptation from without, and every circumstance will conduce to obedience, instead of presenting obstacles to it as now, still men will need to be born again; and where any fail to be so, and manifest the evil of the heart in full rebellion, instead of being borne with and allowed to go on as at present, till the evil spreads, they will be at once cut off by judgment. "Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer." (Ps. 101: 5.) "He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight. I will early destroy all the wicked of the land, that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord." (verses 7, 8.) Nothing can be plainer than that Psalm 145 is a millennial psalm. It celebrates Jehovah's praises as king: "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations." (verses 10-13.) Well, what is the character of this kingdom? "The Lord preserveth all them that love him; *but all the wicked will he destroy.*" (verse 20.) So in the next psalm: "The Lord loveth the righteous: the Lord preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down. The Lord shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations." (Psalm 146: 8-10) The next psalm evidently relates to the same period. It celebrates the restoration of Israel. "The Lord doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel." (verse 2.) "Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion: for he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; he hath blessed thy children within thee." (verses 12, 13.) Well, what is the testimony of this psalm on the subject we are considering — the character of Christ's millennial rule? "The Lord lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground." (ver. 6.) So in other Scriptures. "But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. . . . And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." (Isaiah 11: 4, 5.) "Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." (Isaiah 32: 16-18.) Protected thus by the righteous rule of Christ, the subjects of his kingdom will enjoy its peaceable and blessed fruits, without fear of any intrusion on their happiness.

Time fails to quote more Scriptures on this point. Nor is it needful. Those already cited place it beyond question. But there are a few passages, of deepest interest and surpassing beauty, connecting this universal blessing of the earth, under the reign of Christ with the restoration of Israel (as, indeed, those do we have been considering), that I would ask you to look at for a moment. Psalm 102 is one of these. There we find Messiah, amid the deepest sorrows of his first advent, comforted by the assurance of what the results of those sorrows shall be to Israel and the nations in days to come; for we read here: "This shall be written for the generation to come; and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord." (verse 18.) And what is it that is thus written? — "Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set

time is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof. *So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord*, and all the kings of the earth thy glory." (ver. 13, 15.) And what event is it that introduces this universal subjection to Christ, by means of restored Israel? Ah! the testimony here is, as everywhere besides, that it is the coming, the appearing of the Lord himself. "When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory." (verse 16.)

Isaiah, 27: 6, is a beautiful passage to the same effect. "He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit."

In Jer. 33: 9, speaking of Jerusalem, it is said, (and that it is the literal city, see ver. 4.) "And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good I shall do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness, and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it."

Micah 4 begins with almost the exact words already quoted from Isa. 2. Begin at ver. 4, where, after speaking of the time when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither learn war any more, the prophet says, "But they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it. . . . In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; and I will make her that halteth a remnant; and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever. And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion: the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem." Thus we see the whole earth at rest under the peaceful sway of Jesus: Israel, his favoured nation, most blessed of all; while Zion is the place of his throne, and Jerusalem the metropolis of the millennial earth.

From ver. 11, we have a passing glance at the events which precede this peaceful reign. "Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor." They go to accomplish, as they hope, their own purposes of rapine and ambition; but God actually gathers them there as sheaves into the floor, to be threshed in judgment. "Arise, and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass; and thou shalt beat in pieces many people; and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth." And in the same passage, for this and the next chapter are evidently one continued prophetic strain, we have first the deep humiliation of our Lord: "They shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek." (Micah 5: 1) Yes, it is he who has thus humbled himself, who is to be so highly exalted. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Therefore, — because of his rejection, smiting him on the cheek — "will he give them up (as he has done) until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth." This refers apparently to Isa. 66: 7-9, a passage which we have already examined. "Then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth." (Micah 5: 4.) Israel's place, as the means of

blessing to the nations, is beautifully shown in ver. 7. "And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people, as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men."

One word more I quote, and it is from the New Testament. It is Gabriel's word to the virgin mother of our Lord, when he had foretold to her that she should give birth to a son, and call his name Jesus. "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke 1: 32, 33.) We all know full well, that instead of reigning, he suffered when he was here before. But when he comes again, he comes to reign. To reign indeed over the house of Jacob, as we have seen in so many Scriptures; but more than that, as we have seen in many others, to "have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth."

And what is there, let me ask, which has been so sighed after, or sought with such constancy and avidity, as good government? On what else have men expended the time, the intellect, the energies, the treasures, the human blood, which have been devoted to the pursuit of this? And men are as far from attaining it as ever. The importance and the need of it are felt by all: but after all the varied experiments of so many thousands of years, the grand problem remains unsolved — how is it to be secured? The fact is, the hand is wanting to hold the sceptre: and never till he comes whose right it is, and it is given him, will the world rejoice in that which it has so long sought — righteous, patient, even-handed government. But it will be found then, — found in the peaceful, blessed rule of him after whom the insulting message has been so long sent, "We will not have this man to reign over us." First must he have us, the co-heirs, around him in glory. Then must his earthly people Israel be prepared to welcome him, and be delivered by his hand at his return. Then must his enemies be destroyed, his kingdom rid of all the workers of iniquity. Those who are spared by his clemency to survive these judgments, and form the population of the millennial earth, will gladly bow to his sceptre, and own him as their Lord. Should any be found to resist, immediate judgment clears the earth afresh, and thus keeps it, what the presence of Christ in glory and the outpouring of the Spirit will have made it, "full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." The earthly centre of this glorious kingdom of universal righteousness and peace will be Jerusalem. Those who, among men, occupy the pre-eminent place in this kingdom will be the restored and redeemed nation of Israel. While all the nations of the earth will be blessed and happy, the highest place on earth will be given to that people who have been, more than all others, trodden down and oppressed; yea, who have suffered thus as the righteous judgment of God upon them for the rejection of their King and Lord. A higher place than any on earth will belong to those who, in the present interval between the sufferings of Christ and his return in glory, have shared the fellowship of his sufferings, in hope of his return. This is the church's place: but it is the subject for the next lecture. W. T.