

Gleanings.

THE PROGRESSIVE NATURE OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

It is of great importance in times of excitement, trial, and war, when great changes are happening in the earth, to have deeply impressed upon our minds the cheering truth, that the kingdom of Christ is safe, and that the shaking to which the nations are subjected, is intended to remove those things that should never have existed, in order "that those things which cannot be shaken may remain." The more thoroughly that man's appendages are taken away, and the more fully that Christ's own institutions appear, it will be better for the church and for the world. A few remarks will show how completely the onward progress of Christ's cause is secured.

1. The declarations of Scripture show that this kingdom cannot be destroyed. "And in the days of these kings," it is said in Daniel ii. 44, "shall the God of heaven 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." This is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ—which was set up in the days of the Romans—the last of Daniel's four empires, and in regard to Jesus, the Ruler of which, the angel said to Mary, "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." The same truth is taught by the well-known prophetic figures of the stone "cut out of the mountain without hands," of "the waters that issued forth from under the threshold" of the sanctuary, of the "leaven that leavened the whole lump," and of the tree that grew "till it became the greatest among herbs." The kingdom of Christ, which in its nature is progressive and indestructible, is the only empire on earth that is destined to become universal. "All nations shall serve him."

2. The unlimited authority with which Christ is invested, secures the onward progress of his kingdom. All power has been given to him in heaven and on earth, and the design for which he has thus been crowned King of kings and Lord of lords, is that he may extend and perpetuate his kingdom. "He must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet." He sits on the divine throne, with the book of God's purposes open before him. He has stretched out the rod of his strength, and he will not draw it back, till all his Father's designs, with regard to our world, are accomplished. He will search the earth, gather His people out of all lands, and fill the "many mansions."

3. The gracious dwelling of the Holy Spirit in the church, makes it certain that Christ's kingdom will reach to the close of time. This divine and almighty agent has come down to earth, in order to form the "new creation;" and he will do it. He has at his disposal the "all fulness" that is in Christ, and he will continue to pour it out upon men, till not one saving gift has been unconferred. Nothing can withstand his creative energy. There is darkness over the heathen nations, but there shall yet be light. There is spiritual silence, but there shall be teeming life and gladness. There is disorder—human society "without form and void" of all that is good, but there shall everywhere be order, beauty, and fruitfulness. "The light of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, shall cover the earth," and "men shall be blessed in Christ, and call him blessed." And

4. The spiritual agencies of the church ensure also this result. The Lord will never want a seed to serve him. Those instrumentalities which he has appointed for dispensing the external means of grace, shall never fail to operate, for they are connected with his own faithful promise, "Lo I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." These, sustained by Christ's favouring presence and providence, and by the influence of the Holy Spirit, and wrought out by faith, love, and godly habits, are adequate to the overthrow of all opposition, and to the achievement of the grandest results. Weak, in themselves, and feeble at the outset, they gather strength by exercise, and become irresistably "strong in the Lord, and by the power of his might."