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Doctrine and Duty.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER.]

UNFULFILLED PROPHECY, No. III.

THE MILLENNIUM.

The condition of the Church of Christ on earth, has been a diversified scene of depression and revival, of trouble and victory, of peril and deliverance. Such is its condition now, and such it will continue to be down to the end of the age or dispensation. A new and glorious dispensation is to succeed the present, which is usually called *the Millennium*. The word millennium means a thousand years, and the new dispensation has received this name from the Apostle John's prediction of the reign of the saints on earth for one thousand years, Rev. xx. 3-5. In Scripture it is variously called "the latter days," Jer. xxx. 24; "the times of restitution," Acts iii. 21; "the kingdom of heaven," Matt. viii. 11; "the regeneration," Matt. xix. 28; and "the world to come," Heb. vi. 5.

Let us then search the Scriptures that we may learn something of this "world," literally "age to come," and let us briefly notice the features which distinguish it from the present dispensation. I. We are distinctly taught in the Word of God, that in the Millennium *the Jews shall be converted, restored to their own land, and established there*. God hath said, "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplication, and they shall look upon me whom they pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born, (Zech. xii. 10.) "After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people;" (Jer. xxxi. 33.) "And so," as the Apostle assures us, "all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob," (Rom. xi. 28.)

The promises of the conversion of the Jews, as a nation, are interwoven with all the predictions of their restoration and establishment in their own land. These pro-

dictions are very numerous; I shall at present refer to only two of them, the first is Is. xiv. 1-3, "For I will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and will set them in their own land. And it shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from the fear and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve." The other passage to which I ask your attention is Ezek. xxxvii. 15-23. Here we have a symbol and its explanation; the symbol being the two sticks, the one the stick of Judah, and the other the stick of Ephraim; these sticks become one in the hand of the prophet. The explanation is this, "Behold I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land, and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all; and they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers hath dwelt, and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever; and my servant David shall be their prince for ever; and I will plant them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.

The children of Israel are now "without a prince and without a sacrifice;" they are now "sifted in a sieve," they "are made a hissing and a reproach among all nations." But in the Millennium "Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited," and "the name of the city shall be, *The Lord is here.*" The present literal dispersion and preservation of Israel is a pledge of their future literal conversion and restoration, Jer. xxxi. 28. "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, and then the Lord will restore again the kingdom to Israel."

II. *The earth is to be renovated and delivered from the bondage of corruption.* "For behold," saith the Lord, "I create new heavens, and a new earth," (Is. lxxv. 17.) "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose," (Is. xxxv. 1.) "For the Lord shall comfort Zion, he will comfort all her waste places, and he

will make her wilderness like Eden, and the desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody;" (Is. li. 3.) "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off. (Is. iv. 13.)

Let the reader now carefully examine Is. lxxv. 17-25; and he will learn from this passage the following particulars of the state of things during the thousand years:—

I. The empire of death will be abridged, and probably, except in cases of forfeiture by transgression will be taken away altogether. 2. Men shall dwell peacefully in settled homes, and enjoy the fruit of their labours. 3. The voice of weeping shall be no more heard. 4. The answer of prayer will be direct and immediate. 5. The lower animals shall be divested of every savage propensity, and shall dwell together in peace. In a word the curse will be to a very great extent repealed and eradicated.

Now "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain;" now "the world languisheth;" but in the millennium it "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." The present wretched state of things shall pass away; and good shall displace evil, and the blessing shall succeed the curse. Then animate and inanimate creation shall rejoice together; "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad, let the sea roar and the fulness thereof, let the field be joyful and all that is therein; then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice together, for He cometh, for He cometh to rule the earth." Dr. John Cox, of Woolwich beautifully remarks:—"It would be no encouragement to sing, if at Christ's coming the earth is to be totally annihilated, the 148th Psalm is a divine ode which the blessed Spirit has caused to be written in order to express the joy of the creation on that Sabbath, that jubilee of the earth. The rapturous singer ranges through creation's ranks from the noblest seraph or brightest star, to the lowest worm or meanest inanimate thing, and calls upon all to join the glad some song."

III. *Christ and his saints will reign together gloriously.* "I saw," says Daniel, "in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of