

AN EARTHLY KINGDOM

In the second place we shall note the nature of this coming kingdom. We shall have to content ourselves with glancing at four of its outstanding features. First, it is an earthly kingdom. The passages which we read from Micah 3: 8 to 4: 4, and also from Isaiah 11 and from Revelation 20 left no doubt whatever that what was promised was to occur on this earth. Micah 3: 12 speaks of the desolation which was to come upon Jerusalem. "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest." The very following verse—the beginning of the glorious prediction of what will take place—uses the identical terms in speaking of what is coming. The very place which was to be plowed as a field is eventually to be exalted.

Thus it is made absolutely clear that the future kingdom which God has promised is to be right here on earth in the very place of the destruction which is to come because of human sin. In this same passage in Micah and in the corresponding passage in the second chapter of Isaiah we find it promised that the nations "shall beat their swords into plowshares." Neither swords nor plowshares can be thought of as in heaven. The prophecy is definitely one of a future on earth. Isaiah tells us that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." If time permitted, evidence might be heaped up from passage after passage in the Old Testament to show that this kingdom which is promised to the people of God is something which is to take place right here upon this earth.

A TIME OF EXTERNAL PEACE AND SAFETY

A second feature of the nature of this promised kingdom is that it is to be a time of external peace and safety. The passages which we read from Micah 4 and from Isaiah 11, and many other passages which we might have read, make it abundantly clear that it is not something in the subjective sphere that is being discussed. We read in Micah 4: 4: "They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid." The promise is not that a man shall be enabled to go through great calamity and danger with a peaceful heart. That promise God indeed gives to his people for times of tribulation. But this promise is entirely different. It is the promise of a time when a man need not sit in a house with strong walls and with a lock on the door in order to be safe. Instead he may