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ARTICLE I.

THE HISTORY OF THE SPIRITUAL KINGDOM.

In its opening pages, the Bible gives us the account of Paradise lost; and man forsaken of his God. It closes with a glowing view in the future of Paradise restored, and God again dwelling with man on the renovated earth. The whole period between is filled up with the history of the mediatorial kingdom. There was a time when this form of the divine administration did not exist, and the great and holy God took delight in immediate intercourse with man here on earth. There will come a time when he will again do so; but not until every vestige of sin's dominion is wiped out, and death itself, the last enemy, destroyed, and all things made new. This is the mighty work of the Mediator King, the God-man, Jesus Christ. This is the grand design of his kingdom. The mercy of God founded it for the redemption of our fallen race and the vindication of his own honor; the wisdom, power, and love of the Son are carrying it forward to the final consummation. Then again God shall dwell with man as at his creation; and the Lamb, his mediatorial

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kingdom being ended, shall dwell forever on the peaceful throne of his redeemed Church as their eternal Head and bond of union with the Godhead, and God shall be all in all.

Our design in this article is rapidly to sketch the history of this kingdom, as we gather it from these inspired records of it.

I. ORIGINAL KINGDOM.

This is God's world. He made it for his own glory. To this the headship of a holy intelligent agent, ruling in and over it, was essential. When, therefore, all the rest of this lower creation was completed, and he was about to create man, it was with the expressed purpose that man should be his vicegerent. "Let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." In this royal position Adam was installed as soon as created. For him and his race, the earth was prepared and adapted. He was specially fitted to rule over it, so as to gather from all its changes, and processes, and creatures, a revenue of praise for its Creator. Without him, the world was all a dumb and worthless thing. This headship was the link that bound it to its Creator.

Perfect loyalty to his God was the one necessary condition on which this high honor was to be retained and this high function discharged. As he was God's constituted king and representative, obedience to God was of course absolutely essential to his own authority and dominion.

II. MEDIATORIAL REIGN, IN TYPE AND PREPARATION.

1. *The Kingdom Lost.*

But on the very first assault of the tempter, he disobeyed. At once he fell from his throne. The whole inferior creation rose up in rebellion against him. The earth and the air and the waters, the sun and the moon and the stars, and the whole animal world, cast off his authority. Instead of uniting in a universal ministry of life, they all began to scatter the seeds of disease and death. Since then it has been with painful toil and constant conflict that he has been able to hold the powers and

forces of the natural world in such a degree of subjection and control as is necessary to his own existence. According to his own fatal choice in listening to the voice of Satan, rather than to the command of God, he himself was given up to be Satan's slave and drudge, to his own sore punishment and the glory of God's justice.

But though the creation was no longer in peaceful subjection to him, since he had failed to use it for his Creator's glory, it was inseparable from him. The world and man, being made for each other, must go together. Hence, in the Bible, the whole world is represented as a kingdom whose interests and agencies are employed against God, and Satan as its king. He is called "the god of this world," "the prince of this world," "the prince of the power of the air," "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." And "the creation" is represented as "made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same;" and therefore under "the bondage of corruption," so that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."

2. *Its restoration required by the honor of God.*

Not so, however, could the Creator be despoiled of his glory. He could not suffer one of his own creatures to deprive him of the tribute of praise from his own creation, to triumph over the works of his own hands, and usurp the throne he had established for and given to another. It was essential to the full vindication of the Creator's glory and rights that not only *He* should still reign here and put down Satan's power and all opposition, but that man should reign. God's plan was not to be frustrated by the devil. And the apparent and temporary triumph of the foe was only in order to a brighter display of the divine perfections in the government of this world, and the advancement of its king to a far higher and more wonderful dominion than that which he originally possessed. That God may be fully vindicated and Satan utterly baffled, man must recover his forfeited dominion and again reign on the earth. But the justice of God must be first satisfied, and his holiness be manifested in the plan of such a restoration. It could not, therefore, be realised until

man's rebellion should be fully punished, the terrible consequences of disobedience displayed to all the universe, the frightful malignity of sin thus fully discovered, and a stop put forever to its ravages in the whole creation of God.

3. Its restoration promised.

At first, therefore, this restoration of the lost dominion could be only promised. This was done. With the sentence that followed Adam's first transgression, was an accompanying promise of deliverance; and this promise of deliverance for man was appropriately given not to him directly, but involved in the sentence pronounced upon the serpent, and through him on the invisible tempter. That sentence was the utter destruction of his power, the complete overthrow of his usurped dominion over man, and that to be accomplished by man, by the seed of the woman. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

In close connexion with this promise, explaining it and explained by it, God gave the institution of bloody sacrifices—thus teaching that this restoration of the kingdom and its blessings could only be through the blood of an atonement to be provided by God, such as would satisfy his justice and procure forgiveness.

But even the promise of God is of mighty efficacy. It checks the tide of ruin and the triumph of the tempter. It at once secures and brings down upon the earth and man a divine influence for salvation. Mark well the force of its language: "*I will put* enmity between thee and the woman." It might seem as if the woman, by yielding to the tempter, had gone over entirely to the devil and carried her posterity with her, and united in a hearty alliance with him. And indeed so it must have been, had not God interfered, and by his grace arrested the progress of this Satanic usurpation. This he did, not only by making man bitterly to feel the sore miseries of his new alliance, but by the powerful operations of the Holy Spirit on the heart. This was the heavenly power let down by this promise from above upon the soul of man, to commence at once the work of his restora-

tion. It was here, on this field—the soul of man—that the kingdom was lost and that Satan triumphed, and here it must be regained. It was a spiritual defection that lost it; it is only by a spiritual restoration that it can be recovered. Here the great battle must be fought, and from hence Satan must be cast out, in order that his power as the god of this world may be destroyed.

The reestablishment, therefore, of the divine kingdom on the earth, the restoration of man to his lost dominion, must be essentially a spiritual work. It must consist in breaking up the alliance between man and Satan, in rescuing him from Satan's dominion and bringing back his soul to a hearty and holy allegiance to his God. The moment any man is thus brought back to God and becomes holy, Satan's power over him is gone; created things again become his ministering servants, and all things work together for his good. When, therefore, the race of man on earth shall become holy, the world must return to its original perfect submission to man, and man must reign as God's representative. The restoration then to man of his lost inheritance and dominion, which is the burden of the first promise and the sum of all promises, is involved in the restoration of holiness to man's heart—the restoration of man himself to the image of God.

4. The restoration commenced.

At once the struggle commenced between the grace of God in the heart of fallen man and the usurped dominion of Satan. Satan has never had undisputed possession. God has always put enmity between the woman's seed and the serpent, enough to testify that he had not utterly forsaken his world, nor entirely abandoned his creature, man, to the power of Satan.

On the one side has appeared the kingdom of Satan, of darkness, of all evil, manifesting itself in all the native tendencies of the soul, in the deep and fixed ungodliness that has ever pervaded all human pursuits, in the perversion of all the gifts of God to low, selfish, and wicked ends, and in the violence and strife and woe resulting. But there have also, on the other side, been manifested the interests of this promised kingdom of God,

in earnest resistance to the wickedness of the world, in faithful testimony to the truth and claims of God, in patient submission to his will and trust in his promises. In external appearance, this resistance to Satan's kingdom was very feeble, confined to very few, and those unsupported by the great powers of the world—despised, persecuted, and down-trodden. For it pleased God to leave the world very much to its own way, and to permit Satan to rule for its own just punishment, and to prove to man his own utter ruin and helplessness.

But in this very fewness and feebleness of those who adhered to the spiritual interests of the kingdom of God, appeared really the divine strength of this kingdom, and the evidence of the secret heavenly power that supported it. During the long antediluvian period—more than one-third of the whole time between the creation and Christ—this was especially manifest. That a mere handful of feeble men should thus stand up and contend for God and truth, unconquered and unconquerable, resisting the violence of power, the enticements of ease and pleasure and worldly wisdom, in the midst of and in defiance of a whole world of sinners all leagued against them, and they themselves originally of the same depraved nature, was a proof of the heavenly origin and mighty secret resources of that promised kingdom whose interests they supported, no less convincing than a similar resistance by large multitudes with great visible resources of power and wealth.

In Abel the martyr, and in Enoch the preacher, the spiritual influences and power of this kingdom of God struggling against the reign of Satan strikingly appeared. In the translation of the latter, the secret, invisible, and almighty power of that kingdom for salvation was gloriously displayed. But especially in Noah and his history did its external weakness and its secret invincible strength both appear—one man against the whole world. This led to the first and greatest outward judgment ever sent upon the kingdom of Satan.

5. The first utter external overthrow of Satan's kingdom.

Fiercely did the enmity rage; mightily did the foe prevail. The interests of the promised kingdom of God seemed about to

be overwhelmed, and with it all the true interests of man; for violence filled the earth. To mere human eyes, the triumph of Satan seemed to be complete. When it came to this—one godly man against a world in rebellion—it was time for God to work; and he did. At one stroke of his mighty hand, he swept away the proud antediluvian nations, and buried all their boasted civilisation, and arts, and wisdom, and power, that had filled the earth at once with the triumphs of genius and ungodliness, forever beneath the waters of the deluge. That one man, with his little family and the living creatures preserved with him in the ark—the sole representative of the spiritual kingdom of God—was left alone in the world. The visible power and kingdom of Satan was destroyed by a stroke in the very zenith of its triumphs.

Then the renovated earth is again given to man. But, it should be carefully observed, not to man as man, but to man as redeemed. The whole inspired narrative shows this. It was to Noah as the heir of the promised kingdom. Immediately after the bloody offerings with which he entered on his new and undisputed possessions, the whole earth, renewed and re-peopled by its inferior tribes of living creatures, is, by a covenant of which the bow in the cloud is made the symbol, secured to the delivered family as the representatives of the kingdom of God, and secured in answer to the accepted sacrifices that prefigured the great atonement.

But it very soon became manifest that man could not hold the earth for God; that even this representative family, so wonderfully delivered as being in the interests of the kingdom of God, were unfit to hold it. Satan had still a fearfully strong interest in them, as the testimony of God himself immediately after the flood declares: “The imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth.” *No outward judgments, therefore, can cure it.* It is almost at once evident that the most awful terrors of God’s mightiest judgments had not restored to man the dominion he had lost; it had not crushed the serpent’s head, nor expelled him from the heart of man. In Noah’s own family, the evil breaks out—drawing down upon a portion of his seed the pro-

phetic curse; but accompanied with a promise of final triumph to another portion in covenant with Jehovah. "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem."

First Satanic combination of the world's power.

Rapidly the evil spreads, as if no curse had smitten it; and the kingdom of darkness again overshadows the earth. It boldly attempts to grasp all the power of the world, and concentrate it in one great universal monarchy. This was the daring attempt of the Babel builders, or rather of Satan through them, to baffle and overwhelm, by a great central despotism wielding all the power of the world, all the interests of the kingdom of God. Again, therefore, God interposes, confounds their language, distracts their counsels, and scatters the nations. The three families of Noah's sons are thus kept separate, and the fulfilment of God's purposes, which had been declared by Noah, in reference to his descendants, is secured, and the way prepared for a visible organisation to represent and defend the interests of his kingdom.

G. First outward organisation representing the kingdom of God.

Having thus, by the flood and the confusion of tongues, baffled the attempts of Satan to establish a visible universal kingdom in his interests, God now begins to lay the foundations of a separate, organised government, that shall stand forth before the world as a representative and defender of the interests of this promised kingdom. This work, however, is one that courses through many generations, from Abraham to Moses, and provides for a vast and varied display of the malignity of that dominion to which man had voluntarily yielded himself when he dropped from his hand the sceptre God had given him. It commences in the calling and separation of Abraham, and the covenant made with him; and it is carried on in the training of his descendants through four hundred and thirty years. This long period of preparation for the first visible organised representation of the kingdom of God restored on earth, indicates the vast magnitude and glory of that visible Church or kingdom of which it was the first definite form, and which, in the lapse of coming ages, was to be built upon its foundations. Then, in the establishment of this visible kingdom, comes another terrible over-

throw of the powers of the kingdom of darkness, in the destruction of Egypt, its mighty representative and the enemy and oppressor of God's chosen people. This was, too, not only another most glorious deliverance of his people, but it was a deliverance the same in principle as the final one promised, and strikingly foreshadowing it. It was a redemption from a cruel bondage to Satanic power, and resulted in the actual establishment of a visible kingdom and the possession of the promised inheritance.

Of this kingdom, Jehovah himself is the immediate King, dwelling in the midst of it by a visible symbol of his presence, enacting all its laws, and worshipped in ordinances strikingly impressive to the eye and of deep spiritual import. These ordinances were merely the embodiment in visible forms of those truths, principles, and forces by which the lost inheritance and dominion should be regained. And this visible kingdom was formed to preserve and protect these truths, and to prepare for the full establishment of the true kingdom and the coming and actual reign of the woman's promised seed. At the same time, its purely spiritual design and the spiritual nature of its blessings were most prominently and unmistakably set forth in the wonderful and the truly glorious distinction, that its only King was the unseen, though ever-present, Jehovah. He, in fulfilment of his promise, settled them in the land given to their forefathers, destroying the heathen to make room for them. He preserved and disciplined them there in their successive struggles with the organised powers of the world and the still more dangerous secret influences of the kingdom of Satan. Such a palpable, glorious manifestation as Israel had of the presence, power, and gracious protection of the omnipotent spiritual Jehovah, was enough, if any visible and earthly manifestation could have done it, to have begotten a most joyful confidence, and unswerving allegiance to him, and to have raised them far beyond the reach of either the fear or the allurements of the nations around them. Thus forcibly does Moses, in his last words—his mind all aglow with the view of Israel's high privileges—describe them: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting

arms; and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone....Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency!"

7. *It receives an earthly head at the request of the people.*

But, strange to say, this, their highest glory and distinction, they after a time positively and persistently rejected. In Israel's whole history, there is no more amazing fact than this; and never has there been any development of human depravity and Satan's power more striking, or that showed more fully the extreme difficulty of establishing among men a spiritual kingdom of God. In the time of Samuel, the people persisted in the desire to have a human king over them, that they might be like unto the nations around them. In this desire, and the reason which prompted it, there was, as God himself testifies, a deliberate rejection of him as their true king and all-sufficient protector and ruler. God directs Samuel, who was distressed at what he regarded as the highest treason, to grant their request, but under a most solemn protest against their wickedness, and warning of its consequences. This led to such an entire change in the administration of the affairs of this kingdom of God as greatly to obscure its spiritual nature, especially to their carnal minds. Henceforth it ceased to be the strangely peculiar and spiritual organisation it was before, and became just like the nations around in its external form. This very form, granted in his displeasure, became the very natural occasion of leading their worldly minds into fatal error in regard to the whole nature and design of the Messiah's promised kingdom, and so of causing their final rejection of their divine King when at length he came in the flesh, just as they rejected a purely spiritual King at this time; and so to their own exclusion from the kingdom of God. The solemn protest of God, that in seeking this form they had rejected him, ought to have been enough to have made them sure that this was not the form the kingdom was to assume when it should finally come in all its promised glory.

But while the granting of this request obscured to mere

carnal minds the true nature of the kingdom, and occasioned its rejection by such, God did not cease to be their king. Nor did he suffer this even to retard the development of the true spiritual kingdom. On the other hand, he caused it wonderfully to advance it. As the rejection of Jesus Christ by the Jews, when he came in the flesh, was the occasion of his actual enthronement, so the rejection of their spiritual King by Israel, in Samuel's time, was the occasion of bringing out its completest earthly type. But it was only a type, and they kept on taking it for the substance. They had thus a twofold type—a divine symbol and a human representative. These human kings were required to be merely his representatives—additions to and servants of, not substitutes for, the divine Shechinah. When they ruled as such and the people regarded them as such, as especially in the case of David, the king became a striking type of the greater King promised: and coupled with the promises made to David, that the Messiah should descend from him and inherit his throne, it might have greatly assisted the spiritual mind to a clearer conception of the promised King. Thenceforward such would see not a merely symbolic representative of their divine King, but a human representative—a man exercising the functions of the unseen King; and so might discern a still nearer approach to the fulfilment of the original promise to restore the dominion of the earth to man, that man should reign over the kingdom of God.

S. Political and earthly forces cannot advance it.

It is next made manifest, through a long course of ages, that this earthly kingdom is a very imperfect shadow even, of that promised dominion and that true spiritual kingdom which is to triumph over the usurped dominion of Satan. It must be an arm far mightier than David's, and a throne far more powerful than that of any earthly kingdom, and forces of a far different and more potent kind than the material forces which such kingdoms marshal to their aid, that shall restore to man the dominion of the earth and destroy the power of the devil. To teach this, and to prepare the way thus for that mightier King, was the design of the succeeding history of the chosen people.

To direct the hopes and sustain the faith of the Church during

this period, and perfectly identify that King when he appeared, there was given to David, the head of this line of kings, the promise that his throne should be established forever; and that of the fruit of his body God would set upon that throne one who should be feared as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations; in whose days the righteous should flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. "Before him," it is said, "all kings shall fall down; all nations shall serve him . . . His name shall endure forever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed."

These promises rendered it certain that he by whom this kingdom of God should attain its full establishment would be of the family of David and the heir of his throne. But if any ancient Jew supposed that this glowing picture of the restored kingdom would be realised in the same outward and earthly form, and under a mere earthly head, the history of David's successors and his kingdom was well adapted to correct the vain hope. Almost immediately it began to wane; and with occasional temporary revivings, in which the controlling power of the spiritual element of good or of evil was made more and more prominent, it gradually sunk lower and lower, until it sunk entirely under the power of Babylon, then the chief representative of the kingdom of darkness and the power of the serpent. Still the eye of its heavenly King was watching over its spiritual interests. At this moment of deepest depression, when the visible kingdom had lost its very existence, the voice of prophecy rings out clearer and more definite than ever from the very halls of the heathen conqueror, proclaiming the final triumph of this kingdom of God over all the Satanic and worldly despotisms. The prophecies of Daniel shone with heavenly brightness and power upon the fainting hearts of God's true Israel during the long ages of storm and gloom that followed. Who can tell with what a thrill of joy and hope the believer then, when Satan seemed to have everything his own way, turned to and read and read again and fondly pondered these glorious utterances of the prophetic oracle? "In the days of these kings 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 forever." "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him.....And 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, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

The all-watching providence of God, after a time, cuts down the branching might and honors of Babylon. He restores at the same time to his visible kingdom a deeply humbled and feeble existence; but the earthly power and glory he passes over to the Persian, who inherits the same enmity of the serpent. He, in turn, falls below the Grecian monster, which, after fiercely devouring the remnant of the visible kingdom, bequeaths, in passing away, this Satanic dominion to the last and fiercest of all these representatives of the devil's power, the nondescript monster of Rome. Like the fabled Hydra, this world's power in its monstrous forms, though its heads successively lie crushed and bleeding, is ever throwing out, by the inherent force of the Satanic spirit dwelling in it, others of still more hideous form, until the heavenly King, the promised seed, comes, and pierces the seat of its life, and takes to himself his dominion. During the course of these great worldly despotisms, and under their tyranny, the throne of David, and with it the visible kingdom of God, seemed to have passed away. The family of David was buried in utter obscurity: its true representatives at the last being found on the one side in an obscure maiden, and on the other in a poor carpenter to whom she was espoused, residing in the despised village of Nazareth.

9. The incarnation of its King.

But the promises of God stand firm. The deep depression of the family of David and the visible kingdom of God is only a

fuller proof that that kingdom is spiritual in its nature and foundations, and can never attain its promised distinction and supremacy by material forces and in a mere earthly form. The time had now come to unfold to the waiting gaze of God's true and down-trodden people, and to a deluded and groaning world, the wonderful way in which the seed of the woman was to bruise the serpent's head, and man regain his lost dominion over the world, and that dominion have for its Head the Son of David, and in him become everlasting. Jesus Christ is born of the virgin Mary, the true heir, according to the flesh, of David's throne—of the headship, that is, of the visible kingdom of God. In him God has become incarnate; and the perfect humanity of Jesus is the humanity of a divine person—the eternal Son of God. The Shechinah, the glorious symbol of the divine invisible King, is now realised in a divine person; and with this divine person the human Son of David is identified. The words of the angel that announced to Mary his miraculous conception and birth are: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever and ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

But he came unto his own, and his own received him not: He presented himself as a spiritual King: they demanded one invested with earthly glory. He came with Heaven's own power "to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives" of sin, "and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." Their hearts were set upon an earthly liberty, and triumphs, and glory. While he came the true descendant of David and heir of his throne, he came also as the *real* Shechinah, whose glorious symbol dwelling on the mercy seat, they had in the days of Samuel rejected for a king, that they might be like the nations around them; and now, when he was made flesh and dwelt among them, and his glory shone forth as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, they, for the very same reason, rejected him and crucified their King. They thus, however, only crowned him, and forfeited their own rights and privileges to his Mes-

sianic blessings. Just as under Samuel their rejection of their true spiritual King led to the fullest, most glorious, and impressive typical representation of the kingdom of God, with its Head at once divine and human, so now their rejection of him is by God's wonder-working providence made the means by which he himself is crowned, and the old visible external Israel itself rejected, and a visible form given to the representation of this kingdom more in accordance with its spiritual nature and universal extent.

Though his own received him not, yet many—a remnant according to the election of grace—*did* receive him. And “to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” These became the nucleus of a new visible kingdom, which, as the little stone hewn out of the mountain without hands, smote the mighty powers of the world, and has become even now a great mountain, and shall fill the earth.

It was, as we have already observed, the claims of God's violated law that gave the world over to the dominion of Satan as the executioner of his just displeasure. Satan held possession as the prince of this world, just because the violated law demanded that the sin of fallen and rebellious man should be punished. Christ Jesus, by his perfect obedience and death, rendered infinite in worth by his infinite perfections, met all these claims and cancelled them, and thus, by his atonement, secured the complete redemption of his people from Satan's power, and their restoration to the dominion of the earth in him as their Head. His obedience, sufferings, and triumphant resurrection, removed every obstacle interposed by the justice of God to their restoration to his favor. Their salvation, therefore, and restoration to the lost inheritance and dominion, is his right; and to vindicate and secure it, he ascends the throne of the kingdom of God, and formally commences his mediatorial reign.

III. THE KINGDOM FULLY ESTABLISHED.

10. *The coronation of its King.*

The ascension of our blessed Lord, and his session at the

right hand of the Father in our glorified nature, "angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him," is his actual personal inauguration as the King of this spiritual kingdom of God. The design of this enthronement is that he, as the seed of the woman, may employ all the power of the divine government to subdue and finally destroy, in that way which to his infinite wisdom might appear best, the entire kingdom of evil, and secure to the saints of God—his redeemed and purified people—the dominion of the earth and the fulfilment of the original purpose of God in the creation of man.

Now, therefore, the lineal descendant of David according to the flesh, the hereditary heir of his throne, is found at last in intimate and indissoluble union with the Son of God; the identical soul and body to which belongs the crown of David is found to be the soul and body of a divine person, of the eternal Son; and that person has actually carried this human nature of his up to the very throne of God. In it he there reigns as "Head over all things to the Church," and as the Head of that very spiritual, real kingdom of redeemed sinners of which David's visible kingdom was only a feeble shadow and for the time the outward representation. This being so, where but in this human nature and on this heavenly throne to which he has carried it, are we to look for the fulfilment of that promise made to David, that his seed should reign for ever and ever, and of the same promise made to Mary at the annunciation of his birth? Being a divine person, he could find no earthly throne a fitting seat; to the high dignity and perfections of this Son of David, no throne could be suitable but the throne of God itself.

His right to that throne, the grounds of that right, his actual investiture with supreme dominion, and its glorious results, are all set forth most strikingly in the sublime vision of John, recorded in the fifth chapter of Revelation. He alone of all beings in the universe is found able to open the seven-sealed book of God's purposes in regard to this kingdom; and when he takes the book from the hand of him who sits upon the throne, the crowned representatives of this priestly kingdom burst forth into the new song, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the

seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth." Immediately all the hosts of angels unite in the loud acclaim, "Worthy the Lamb," and every creature in heaven, earth, and sea, join with them in ascribing equal and supreme honors and power to "him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

What a glorious advancement, then, have we here of the grand and gracious purposes of Jehovah! Is not the mediatorial kingdom fully established? Is not its spiritual and heavenly nature fully displayed? When over this kingdom of God a perfect man reigns, and that man united to a divine person, and seated on the very throne of God, and wielding there all the powers of God's universal government, what further advance in this direction can there be? What more perfect and complete fulfilment could there be of this promise made to David and the ancient Church? "His seed will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven." "Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established forever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven."

In the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ to the right hand of the Father, therefore, the promise of the restoration of the forfeited kingdom has already been gloriously and wonderfully fulfilled. The apostle, in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, referring to the eighth Psalm, in which man's original and forfeited dominion is described, and its fullest realisation intimated as yet future, describes this as fulfilled already in Christ: "One in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who

was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." Let the Church of God, then, take up the triumphal song of the Psalmist, "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof." Jehovah Jesus reigns. A man has been raised to the throne. The very nature that Satan thought to have destroyed, and so to have forever crushed the kingdom which God had here established at the creation, has been taken up into fellowship with the Godhead—nay, into indissoluble union with the Son of God—and made the medium through which God rules over all this lower creation.

11. The present dispensation, the fully established Mediatorial Kingdom.

Accordingly, the present dispensation of the grace of God is constantly represented as the real, the spiritual kingdom of God, the mediatorial reign of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Even when in the flesh, Jesus spoke of himself as a king and of his kingdom: "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence." And in answer to Pilate's question, "Art thou a king, then?" he answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth." And just before his ascension, he uses language, in commissioning the apostles, which implies the possession of the very highest kingly dominion: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

Throughout the Gospels, the present dispensation of God's grace receives as its characteristic designation, "the kingdom of heaven," a phrase peculiar to Matthew, and "the kingdom of God," used by the other evangelists as its equivalent. The gospel is called repeatedly "the gospel," or glad tidings, "of the kingdom"—of the kingdom not as ages distant, but as come already, or just at hand. The parables that describe the present dispensation, describe it as the kingdom of God; as *the* kingdom—that which was promised to the fathers, predicted by the prophets, symbolized in the visions of Daniel, and the object of

the Church's cherished hope for ages. Of it Jesus said to a multitude assembled around him, after having warned them of the decisive and tremendous results that would attend the final consummation of it, speaking of its establishment, its beginnings: "Verily, I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power."

It was the announcement of this fact—that he, their promised Messiah, had ascended his throne—which carried such terror to the hearts of those who heard Peter on the day of Pentecost. Explaining the 16th Psalm in its application to Christ, Peter declares that David, "being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ..... This Jesus," he adds, "hath God raised up, whereof we are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David hath not ascended into the heavens; but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." And on another occasion, before the Sanhedrim, he says: "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour."

In the Epistles, also, we find the same idea recurring in various forms, and all the spiritual blessings of the present dispensation of grace attributed to this kingdom. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." He "hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." "Receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God with reverence and godly fear," says Paul to the Hebrews, where the connexion fixes it to the present dispensation of a glorified Saviour, which he contrasts with the old dispensation of the visible kingdom established at Sinai.

Of this, then, there cannot remain a doubt: The King has ascended his throne. He is now reigning in glory. His kingdom is no longer a matter of promise, but a reality, a present existence. Its interests control every movement of providence, and its powers and influences find a glad welcome in millions of subject hearts. Its triumphs, however, are merely commenced; the glorious results will not be complete till these triumphs are consummated. But this is made sure by the fact that the King has entered on his glory, and taken to himself his great power, and reigns for this very purpose.

12. *The present mediatorial reign essentially militant.*

The very design of the present mediatorial reign is to subdue all opposition, and to fill the earth with the glory of God. This is in the very nature of a mediatorial reign. The necessity of it arises from a state of opposition and enmity or rebellion. Its single, grand, immediate design is to restore peace. This can only be brought about by the perfect triumph of the divine government. But, being restored, there is no longer any room for a mediatorial kingdom or work. It ceases by a limitation, inherent in its very nature. In its very nature, therefore, it is militant. "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion; rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." "Wherefore"—*i. e.*, because he had been obedient unto the cross—"God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." "For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet."

It is important here to mark the two distinct aspects of this kingdom, first, towards the redeemed, who are the recipients of its blessings and for whose sake it is constituted; and, secondly, towards the rest of the universe, all the resources of which it employs on the behalf of the former. We have this twofold aspect of it beautifully and briefly expressed by the apostle in Eph. i. 22, in the words: "Head over all things to the Church." But in both these aspects of it, it is as it exists here on earth,

during this dispensation, necessarily militant. Its willing subjects—those who gladly bow to the yoke of Jesus and delight in his blessed rule—are ever here contending with *foes within and without*. “The flesh lusteth against the spirit.” “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers,” etc. The conflict rages within and without. And until every enemy, every vestige of the power of sin in the souls of all the redeemed is destroyed, and their bodies, too, delivered finally and forever from the power of death by the destruction of this “last enemy,” the work for which Jesus is represented as having ascended his throne and established his mediatorial kingdom will not have been accomplished. Till then it must continue, and continue in conflict.

We might have expected that when Christ had come, and ascended his heavenly throne, and been clothed with universal dominion, he would at once have put forth the powers of that throne, and reduced the rebellious world to submission, and put an end to the fierce and long conflict between the seed of the woman and of the serpent, by crushing utterly the serpent’s head. And so the Jewish Church expected. They confounded the consummation with the founding. And often, as presented in the stirring visions of prophecy, to sustain the sorely tried faith and fainting hopes of God’s people, and when the entire reign of the Messiah was viewed as a whole and in the distance of ages, the two would naturally merge together, and the conflict be scarcely visible in the glorious and completed results. But enough was even then given—as, for example, in the 2d and 45th and 110th Psalms—to show that the coronation and the triumph were not the same. He is there represented as exercising his kingly functions in subduing the rebellious nations who were uniting to cast off his authority, and as breaking them with a rod of iron; as riding forth in royal majesty, gradually subduing his enemies by truth and meekness and righteousness; as waiting on the throne yet in the exercise of its powers, until his enemies are made his footstool.

13. *Its past history confirms this, and shows that this militant state was to be protracted.*

But neither the ancient Jews nor the early Church could ever have imagined that almighty power and love would have delayed the consummation so long and permitted the conflict to rage still so fiercely, and Satan still to seem to be the god of this world to such an extent. But the omniscient eye of God saw that neither the malignity of sin nor the magnitude of redeeming mercy could be fully shown until the amazing spectacle was laid before the universe of bleeding love despised, and this kingdom of love rejected, and its very waters of life poisoned, though everywhere presenting Heaven's broad seal, and offering Heaven's richest blessings to a sin-smitten and suffering world. And the whole past history of this kingdom is now seen to be in fullest accord with the predictions of the ancient prophets and of Jesus and his apostles. The prophecies already referred to and others are perfectly consistent with a long militant period of the kingdom, and others as those of Daniel demand it. Those of Christ and his apostles clearly intimate it. Always directing us to his second coming as the consummation of this period, it is taught that the gospel must first be preached to all nations. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," and "lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." In the parable of the talents, it is only "after a long time" that "the Lord of those servants cometh." And the Church's faith is represented as sorely tried by the long delay. "Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?" And in Rev. vi. 10, we hear the symbolic cry of the souls under the altar during the ages of trial, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" And the impression which the whole book of Revelation must make on every careful reader, however little he may understand of its symbols, is that the glorious consummation was not to come till after many a fierce and varied struggle.

And accordingly now, though eighteen hundred years have passed away since he ascended his throne, the world is yet far from being subdued. The Church is still a little and a feeble flock. The nations are still taking counsel together against the

Lord and against his anointed. And he is still breaking them with a rod of iron, and dashing them in pieces as a potter's vessel. Satan still reigns among the nations; sin still predominates; misery still fills the earth with cries and wails of woe; and death still devours his victims. But it is also true that the gospel of his grace, the rod of his power, is going forth, that thousands of souls submit to him as their King, and enjoy the blessings of his kingdom. It is true, that silently the streams of this salvation are flowing further and further over the earth; that its light is penetrating the hovel and the palace, and even into the darkest seats of Satan's power, gathering every where an elect and redeemed people to the praise of the glory of his grace. How the progress is to be hereafter, with what accelerated speed and by what accumulated and multiplied judgments and spiritual influences, is known only to the King himself, except what glimpses of the future he has in his word given us for our consolation. The result, however, is certain; for to accomplish it, the King has ascended the throne, is at the right hand of the Father, and all the resources of the divine government are employed to bring it about.

14. During this militant reign, his bodily presence not to be expected or desired.

While, therefore, his second coming to put an end to this conflict, and perfect the salvation of his people and the triumphs of his Church, is the grand object of the believer's hope and infinitely to be desired, we cannot think that his presence here on earth during this present militant state of his kingdom is to be either expected or desired. It was for this very design that he ascended to his Father's throne, and that angels and authorities and powers were made subject to him. "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things." Shall we expect him to change his throne for one on earth, however glorious, before he has accomplished that design? or, except to put an end to all conflict, and take possession of the completed and unchanging results, his own redeemed and glorified people in their own renovated world?

Would it be any advancement in the actual power and influence of this King, or any enhancement of our conceptions of his greatness and his excellence as the object of our trust and the foundation of our hope, for him to leave that throne in the heavens, and to come down to earth and dwell in his human form, however glorified, here among men, and establish a visible throne at Jerusalem or any where else? Does it enlarge our ideas of the power of his arm, or the riches of his grace, to conceive it either necessary or desirable that he should, during the fierce conflict between his spiritual kingdom and the kingdom of darkness, during that period in which he is gathering his elect and gradually subduing his foes, visibly appear among men after he has ascended to glory?

How do you now, believer, conceive of your Lord? Is it not as seated on the throne, in the unapproachable depths of the divine glory, looking down upon all worlds and into all hearts, and from thence controlling all the agencies of the visible and invisible world? Thus conceiving of him, do you not feel him ever near you, his power surrounding you, his hand sweetly holding you, and powerfully and easily controlling all your enemies, and his ear always open to hear with equal facility *your* heart's faintest whisper, wherever you are on the earth's wide surface, and the like cry of every child of the kingdom at every moment over all the world?

Now, would it increase these conceptions of his presence and power, and your facilities of actual communion with him, to think of him as actually present in his human nature in some particular spot *on earth*, where he received the visible homage of the favored few around him? or as visiting place after place, and displaying his visible glory to our mortal eyes? What kind of a visible glory would that be which these mortal eyes could see and these mortal frames endure? Oh, how far, how inconceivably far, below that heavenly glory in which we are taught now to conceive of him—a glory which none but glorified beings can behold; and below that glory in which he will assuredly associate with his people on the renovated earth, when the whole conditions of earthly existence shall have been changed after the

resurrection. Then, indeed, we shall see him as he is; for then we shall be like him. Must the magnificence of heaven, the unsearchable splendors of that living radiance which surrounds the majesty above, as now ever present to the eye of faith, and in the conceptions of every suffering praying saint, be exchanged for such low forms of material glory as these poor eyes can see and these poor hands can handle? Who would not rather think of him as *the brightness of the Father's glory, on the right hand of the majesty on high*, and by faith behold him where dying Stephen saw him? What other possible view of him could, equally with this, assure and comfort the hearts of his suffering, struggling people now, or strike such terror into the hosts of hell?

15. The second coming ends this militant kingdom.

The glorious hope, however, still remains to animate our hearts, that "we shall see him as he is," and see him here on this very earth that was stained by his blood and consecrated by the conflicts of his suffering Church; but it is when "we shall be like him." The time is hastening on when "every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him," but it is not to have new offers of his grace, or to feel some mightier redemptive power by his visible presence. He will not come to do the work committed to the Third Person of the blessed Trinity, the application of salvation to the soul, as if the almighty Spirit was unequal to the task. That work will then have been completed. It is to end the strife with sin, and close his mediatorial reign, and establish his everlasting kingdom. The universality of doom then awarded is thus explicitly declared by the apostle: he "shall judge the quick and dead at his appearing and his kingdom." That judgment is not the exercise of mere ruling power; that he is now and always exercising; it must be the final decision of the Judge fixing their eternal state. And what language can more forcibly express this complete universality of reward and punishment at his appearing, than this of Paul in 2 Thes. i. 6-10: "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, rest with us, when

the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power: when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

It destroys death. "For he must reign," says the apostle, "till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Now this reign, which must continue till death, the last enemy, is destroyed, we are expressly told, shall be given up to the Father, when this is done. "Then cometh the end,"—literally, the end is,—“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. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.” But how is death destroyed? Only at and by the resurrection; as long as the body of a single saint remains in the grave, or liable to dissolution, death still reigns, the destruction pledged in redemption and to be accomplished by the Mediator is not complete. And this resurrection of the saints is at Christ's second coming, after which there can therefore be no more dying. The same context expresses all this very plainly. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the first-fruits; afterwards, they that are Christ's at his coming." This glorious triumph over the last enemy is still more fully described in the thrilling and jubilant language of verses 51-57 of this chapter. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

Here then most assuredly is death's destruction. The last enemy is put under the King's feet. It is at his second coming. It ends his mediatorial reign. And it is by the universal resurrection and change of the entire body of his redeemed.

These passages speak only of the resurrection of believers; and that for the simple and obvious reason that their resurrection alone can in any proper and scriptural sense be said to destroy death. The resurrection of the wicked instead of being a deliverance from death, is the consummation of death eternal to both body and soul. Accordingly the resurrection of the saints is always distinguished from that of the wicked. It could not be otherwise. It is different entirely in its nature, grounds, and results. This is a difference far more complete than any difference of time, and rendering it far more impossible to treat them together. It is only the resurrection of the righteous which is resurrection unto life—a resurrection that delivers entirely from death in its true and fullest sense, or indeed in any sense that is desirable; the resurrection of the wicked is a "resurrection of damnation," and is strictly a resurrection *unto* death in its fullest and completest sense. So that the phrase—"the resurrection from the dead,"—whether taken in the common sense of resurrection of the dead, or in that which many think it ought to have, "from among the dead," can apply only to believers; and beautifully and forcibly distinguishes their glorious resurrection from that of those whose bodies are called from their graves only to be given over to the death that never dies. By it is wiped away that last vestige of that curse of death that caused them for a time to be still apparently associated with the dead who remain forever under the power of death. Hence this phrase in its most intensive form as it occurs in Phil. iii. 11—a form not at all preserved in our translation—is grandly appropriate to express the object of the apostle's stirring emotion: "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection out of, which is from among the dead." This distinction then of the two resurrections, furnishes no argument whatever for a difference of time. But it does what is infinitely more important. It brings out into bold relief the glorious destiny of God's redeemed, even as re-

gards their bodies, which, by virtue of their union with Christ who is their life, shall, when he appears, "be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself."

By this, the triumph of the Mediator is complete, so far as regards the persons of his redeemed. But this destruction of "the last enemy" implies of necessity the destruction of every other.

The end of sin and sinners on earth. It follows, therefore, that Christ's coming will destroy sin on the earth, as well as death. It must end the former in order to end the latter. Sin brought death; and while men are born in sin, death must still reign. Sin therefore must cease completely and absolutely from the earth, and all the incorrigibly wicked receive their final doom when Christ comes. This would seem to be very definitely stated in the first chapter of Second Thessalonians, already quoted, where it is expressly said of "them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," that they "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints and admired in all them that believe." Manifestly, this language cannot with any fairness describe a doom any other than both universal and final. It teaches that when he comes this mixed state shall no longer be, and sin and sinners no longer pollute the earth. The tares are gathered and burned when the wheat is gathered into the garner. They were spared only for its sake. This "vengeance" is visited, *when he comes* "to be glorified in his saints." That same day of his coming is called by Peter, "the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." How long that day will be, has not been told us; but whether long or short, it is the day in which Christ will *judge the quick and dead at his appearing*. We are told that the guilty inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Tyre and Sidon, of Capernaum and Chorazin and Bethsaida,—that all "who know not God," that all the angels too that kept not their first estate, and that led man and strengthened him in his rebellion, shall be there and receive their final doom. To this the

“resurrection of damnation” is essential, this completes that doom. This judgment, according to Matt. xxv. 31–46, whatever may be said about its being a judgment of nations as such, is manifestly to every reader who regards only the proper sense of the language, a judgment in which the final awards of eternal punishment and eternal life are meted out according as the character of each one in every action is decided by the presence or the want of love to Christ. It is a day of ending, not of continuing the conflict, or of long protracted judgments or of trial; it is not an *era*, but an *epoch*, an act or series of acts by which an end is put to this dispensation of the kingdom offered and advancing, and the eternal dispensation of the perfectly restored kingdom of God introduced. Sin and sinners therefore are forever banished and doomed.

16. The final conflagration and renewal of the earth.

But still further. The second coming of our Lord brings with it another event that fully confirms these views,—the final destruction of the earth in its present form by fire, in like manner as it was once before destroyed by water; only so as to effect a more complete transformation of all its present processes, laws, and capacities. This is expressly taught by Peter, in answer to the question of the scoffers of the last days, who shall say, “Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” “This they willingly are ignorant of,” he says, “that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water; whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: 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....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. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of that day of God,

wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." This is evidently no annihilation, but a glorious renovation. By these final fires that shall seize on all things here below, every vestige of sin's dominion over the earth shall be not merely wiped out, but burned out. Every thing that was associated with sin and sinners shall disappear. Now the curse has seized on every thing. Death lurks in the air we breathe, the food we eat, in the sunshine and the darkness alike; in every process of life there are seeds of death. But then all shall be changed. The groans and sorrows of this lower creation shall then come to an end. "There shall be no more curse." "New heavens and a new earth," by which are meant not the starry heavens, but the heavens that belong to this earth, and the earth itself,—a common phrase frequently used to express the whole constitution of physical nature, including the atmosphere with all its properties and powers,—shall succeed. "New" they shall be in all their arrangements, laws, and processes. Those deep-hidden and mysterious principles of nature, of which the keenest researches of science catch now but passing glimpses, but glimpses which stimulate and fill with wonder, and those secret agents whose powers seem so amazing and so illimitable, as electricity and magnetism, but of whose nature we know nothing, shall then perhaps be with all their ethereal natures, brought out into full play, and become the known and visible and familiar powers of nature. A new world at least it shall be, perfectly adapted to the new bodies of the risen saints, and to the bright displays of the glory of the Son of man as he lives with and reigns over his redeemed.

How new it shall be, and how truly and literally we are to understand these things, the apostle Paul teaches us in his *Epistle to the Romans*, ch. viii. 19 v.: "The earnest expectation of the creature [*i. e.*, the creation] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. . . . Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation

groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Such language expresses a complete change in the whole constitution of nature, so as to adapt it to be the fitting and glorious abode of the glorified saints. And this renovation of all things is stated again by Peter, Acts iii. 20, to be the glorious close of this dispensation of Christ's mediatorial reign in heaven: "He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

17. The thousand years.

But where, then, in this history shall we place the thousand years mentioned in Revelation xx.? The highly symbolic character of that passage, and the various and widely different interpretations given to it by men who equally reverence the word of God, render it very improper to make it a key for the interpretation of other and perfectly plain passages. It must receive an interpretation in consistency with the plainer. It describes a symbolic binding for a thousand years of that same old dragon that in the twelfth chapter was seen in the symbolic heaven, and was then cast out into the symbolic earth, and there made war upon the saints, giving his power to the beast. As a consequence of this symbolic binding, there is a symbolic reigning with Christ of the spirits of the martyrs who had resisted the beast; which is called the first resurrection. The old dragon, called here Satan, is most certainly not the person of Satan, any more than the binding is a literal binding, or the pit a literal pit, or the heaven the literal heaven. As he is before described, he is a monster with seven crowned heads and ten horns. It can be nothing else but the world's power in its political aspect, as inspired by Satan, who has ever wielded it since the building of Babel. Before the coming of Christ, by reason of the Church's political or national form, this power obtained a standing even inside the Church—in the ecclesiastical sphere, the heavenly places, the regions set apart for the powers of the spiritual kingdom. When Christ ascended his throne, and founded his kingdom as a purely spiritual kingdom, this dragon of political power

lost its standing there, and was cast out of the ecclesiastical or heavenly sphere into the earth, where at first he made fierce assaults upon the Church by means of the violence of the nations, and finally gave his power to a beast just like him—the heathen power christianized, supported by another—the false prophet or delusive wisdom of the world, by which agencies he prevails over the visible Church. These two have been, already at the time spoken of in the twentieth chapter, cast into the burning lake, forever destroyed. The dragon himself is not yet cast there, but simply chained in the bottomless pit for a thousand years. Can this possibly mean anything else than that this Satan-inspired political power shall be so completely restrained that no national powers or influences shall any longer oppress and restrain the free development of the spiritual kingdom, and that therefore the spirits of the martyrs, of those who had opposed that power, shall then be the true symbol of the ruling influences and spirits and people of the earth? This will be indeed “life from the dead,” as Paul says of the effect of the conversion of the Jews; it will be a glorious resurrection of the witnessing agencies and spiritual power of the Church; a blessed pledge of that complete and final deliverance, when at the last, after a brief reviving of this same worldly power under the Satanic influence, from which there again the restraints have been removed, this Satanic power also shall itself be, not bound, but forever destroyed—cast, as the beast and false prophet had already been, into the lake of fire. Then also “*death*” itself and “*hell*” are cast into the same lake; in other words, then it is that death and the grave shall be brought to an end by the resurrection of the body. Then shall the saints reign forever. The former reign of a thousand years was but the pledge and preparation for this. That is the time and those the events, which, as we have already seen, characterise the second visible appearing of our Lord to destroy the last enemy, and to end his mediatorial reign, a large portion of which, according to this vision of the seer, is to be one in which the saints hold the ruling influences of the earth, and to enter upon his eternal and unchanging kingdom.

18. *The Time.*

The time of this end is declared to be kept a profound secret in the bosom of the Godhead. And in reference to the general question of time, the answer of Christ to his disciples just before his ascension should be fully satisfactory: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." There are certain times and periods, indeed, mentioned in the book of Revelation of a suffering and triumphant Church; but whatever else they may have been designed to teach, it is certain they were not intended to remove in any degree the obscurity that rests on the day and hour of Christ's second coming. That uncertainty is as much opposed to the presumption that it is very near as that it is far off. "Ye yourselves," says Paul to the Thessalonians, "know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." And the feverish excitement caused among these Thessalonians by the apprehension that it was just about to burst upon them, he allays in his Second Epistle by these words: "Now, we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand." He then further teaches that first a great apostasy was to be developed, the principles of which were even then at work, but secretly, being restrained for a time by an unnamed power. How long this restraint was to continue, and how long a course this great apostasy was to run "with all power and signs and lying wonders," deceiving them that obey not the truth, he does not give an intimation; and honest and earnest students are even now divided as to the very nature of this apostasy, or as to whether this man of sin and son of perdition has even yet arisen. And we are persuaded that the more earnestly, humbly, and sincerely any one studies this passage, the more will he find it impossible to extort by any pressure of critical logic or acuteness any such definite answer as has been sought from it, such as shall decide whether this apostasy shall culminate in a single individual or only in an organised system, or whether it is to be located on one system, to the exclusion of others that have in different degrees

the same characteristics.* The very design of the apostle is so to present this great apostasy in its horrible and leading features, that while these would be readily detected and their progress traced, yet their existence in different degrees and forms of error would render it impossible for the Church ever to tell when it was even completely developed, much less when its end was to come. It answered perfectly, therefore, the great end of the apostle in introducing it here: to correct the feverish anxiety occasioned by an immediate apprehension of the end of all things, by interposing such a view of intervening dangers and conflicts of uncertain length as would stimulate to incessant watchfulness, and patient preparation for and earnest desire of the coming of the Lord, to end the fearful strife.

But, however protracted that end may be, it is in its relation to the individual believer virtually and for all practical purposes just as near as his death. Then the militant state of the kingdom ends with him; then he goes to be with Jesus, and with him in perfect bliss, to wait for the grand consummation of his hopes.

This has led to serious error in the manner in which our Lord's coming is viewed. Death is virtually made to take its place; and the state of the disembodied spirit after death is substituted for the perfected glory of the consummated kingdom at the resurrection. This is entirely reversing the scriptural view. The Bible rather seems to put Christ's second coming in the place of death. It holds up this event in such prominence, and invests it with such luminous glory, as completely to obliterate all perception of any period intervening. Instead of fixing the eye on *death*, which to nature must be always repugnant in itself, it fixes it on the triumph over death and all the stirring and glorious and definite events that accompany and follow the resurrection. It gives no countenance whatever to that common con-

*Neither can it be assumed or proved that the phrase, "the brightness of his coming," τῆ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ, more literally, "the manifestation of his presence," is exclusively the last visible coming, the final act by which he closes the present administration; as most certainly the "coming" or presence of the man of sin in the next verse cannot be a single consummating act.

ception of the Church which substitutes to so great an extent an ideal heaven of mere human imagination and shadowy forms for the realities of the resurrection state, as the great object of the believer's hope. It tells us enough, indeed, of that intermediate state to remove all shrinking from the call to pass through it. Yet it gives us our whole knowledge of it in one single phrase, "with Jesus"—with him in a state of conscious bliss and triumph; with him waiting in triumphant joy for his coming. It represents the fight as fought, the victory won, but the *crowning* with eternal life as yet future, yet as the necessary result, for which we have only to wait until the rest of his redeemed are gathered.

IV. THE MEDIATORIAL REIGN ENDS IN THE PERFECTED AND ETERNAL KINGDOM.

19. This kingdom, or mediatorial reign, then delivered up.

When all this shall have been done, the great design for which Christ was constituted Mediator will have been accomplished. The serpent's head will be crushed, and all his seed consigned to their eternal prison, no more to deceive or disturb a holy universe, and will be an eternal monument of God's justice and of the malignity of sin. There will be an end of death. No more souls to be saved, no rebels to God to be brought back—in a word, no mediatorial work to be done. And as all his power over the other agents and influences of the universe was given for this purpose, when this is accomplished, he can have no further use for it. Having faithfully used the mighty trust, and fulfilled the task of redeeming to God a chosen people and forming them into one glorified and perfected body, with him as their living head, he presents back in triumph the Father's great commission, amid the rapturous shouts of angelic hosts and of the ransomed kingdom itself—more rapturous than those in which he is represented as receiving it from the Father. This is no lessening of his dignity and high honors; it is their grandest consummation. Having gloriously finished his work, he is crowned with the glory of eternal triumph. "And when," says the apostle, "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." The separation caused by sin between God and his redeemed shall have been entirely healed, and God shall again dwell with men, and hold intercourse with them as before sin entered.

But the Mediator must forever continue the brightest and most glorious of all the beings in the universe. Though his mediatorial *work* ceases, and his reign over the *universe for this purpose* is ended, his mediatorial *nature* and character and glory are eternal as his being. And he shall ever be worshipped as the mighty restorer of God's violated majesty and dominion on the earth. And the blessed *results* of his work shall be permanent as eternity.

20. *The eternal results—the kingdom of God on earth restored.*

Of these results, we have in the revelations of God some bright and glorious visions. We have already glanced at the opening scenes of that restored and perfected kingdom; the redeemed, arisen, glorified, and with the Lord; sin destroyed from the earth, and all further ravages of it among the creatures rendered forever impossible; and the earth itself renewed, and adapted as the eternal home of the glorified Church.

Then shall Paradise be regained. The whole earth itself shall be one vast sea—one bright blaze of glory. Then shall Christ dwell here on earth, and *reign* here on earth over his redeemed; and they shall reign with him and have universal dominion here. All creatures, all the powers and agencies of nature, shall do them homage. The fiat of Jehovah at man's creation shall then receive a grand accomplishment, and man a far more glorious inheritance than the paradise of his creation or the life he originally received. For having been redeemed by the blood of a Mediator, and new-created by his Holy Spirit, and being so united to him as to be partakers of his life, and dependent, as the branch on the vine, for the perpetuation of this life, on the living influences of his grace and power, how infinitely and inconceivably intimate, tender, and loving, will be their actual communion with him in glory. "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto

living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Then it shall be said: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." Then the Triune God—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—in whatever inscrutable ways he now displays himself to unfallen beings without a Mediator, shall in all the manifested glory of his character again dwell among us.

It will indeed be Paradise restored. But what a Paradise! See how John represents it, or rather how, in the last visions of Patmos, it was represented to him as a glorious picture ever to dwell before the expectant vision of God's waiting Church. It appears no longer as the garden of delights first bestowed upon man in his innocence. During the long course of the intervening ages of this mediatorial reign of Jesus, there have been gathered into it all the glorious things of God's creation, not of earth only, but of heaven; so that it has become a vast city, filling the earth with its heavenly radiance; the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, the very description of whose splendors and riches and blessedness and security, with God and the Lamb in the midst of it and the light of it, now oppresses and overwhelms the imagination.

Such are the accomplished results of the mediatorial kingdom, when its present militant state ceases and the end shall come. They are, in a word, the eternal and perfected Church of God, with Christ Jesus their Head and eternal King reigning peacefully and gloriously in their midst here on the renovated earth. Then shall the song of the crowned elders be accomplished with which they greeted the Redeemer's coronation, "We shall reign on the earth."

"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me,

Write; for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." "And there shall be no more curse." "And they shall reign forever and ever."

ARTICLE II.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE ANCIENT MIND WITH
RESPECT TO TRUTH.

Wagner—Verzeiht! es ist ein gross Ergützen.
Sich in den Geist der Zeiten zu versetzen,
Zu schauen, wie vor uns ein weiser Mann gedacht,
Und wie wir's dann zuletzt so herrlich weit gebracht.

Faust—O ja, bis an die Sterne weit. [*Goethe's Faust.*]

It is generally a habit of the present day to patronize the past; and if some are found to smile at the extravagant praises which are commonly expended on the nineteenth century, very few there are, nevertheless, in whose inmost minds these praises do not find an echo of approval. In all that we hear said of the achievements of modern civilisation, it is easy to observe a tone of complacency, which betrays the proud consciousness of those who feel themselves set far forward on the way of knowledge and wisdom; and it is as the mouth-piece of his generation that the Laureate of England sounds the lofty and sonorous words: "I, the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time."

Now, while a certain respect is due, to be sure, on all points, to a prevailing public opinion, yet a reasonable mind cannot accept this as final authority for the settlement of any question. It cannot, therefore, be without interest to inquire wherein consists that great intellectual and moral superiority of the present