

THE TWO THRONES,

REPRESENTING THE KINGDOMS OF GRACE AND OF GLORY.

THE existence of a throne supposes the existence of a kingdom. As by the thrones of Europe, the kingdoms of Europe are understood, so when the sacred Scriptures speak of heavenly thrones, heavenly kingdoms are meant. The throne of grace represents the kingdom of grace. The throne of glory represents the kingdom of glory. We here give two texts, side by side, which speak of the two thrones; one, of the throne of grace, and the other, of the throne of glory.

THE THRONE OF GRACE.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Heb. 4:16.

THE THRONE OF GLORY.

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. Matt. 25:31.

The kingdom of grace is God's plan to save man by grace. It was established as early as mercy and grace were offered to fallen man. Adam, Abel, Noah, Abraham, and Moses were as truly the subjects of the kingdom of grace as the apostles and martyrs of Jesus were, or as the followers of Christ now are.

The kingdom of glory is future. In connection with its establishment will be the second coming of Christ in power and great glory, to raise the righteous dead, and to change the living righteous. These, all immortal, will be the eternal subjects of the kingdom of glory. In Paul's most solemn charge to Timothy, he associates the coming of Christ and the last Judgment with the immortal kingdom. "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who

shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom: Preach the word." 2 Tim. 4:1, 2. This kingdom will be God's arrangement to glorify and reward the immortal righteous, who are saved from every nation, tongue, and people, during the ages of human probation.

The kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory are closely related to each other. The former was established to prepare subjects for the latter. They span the time of all the ages from the fall, when the plan of redemption was instituted, embracing the eternal future. Two conditions of the people of God are expressed by the phrase, kingdom of Heaven, so frequently used in the New Testament. Sometimes it expresses their present condition, in this world, and sometimes their future condition in the world to come.

THE TWO THRONES.

The Scriptures distinctly speak of two thrones. One is the throne of the Father, the other is the throne of the Son. Christ first sits on the throne of the Father, to reign in connection with him in the kingdom of grace until human probation shall close. He will then reign upon his own throne forever, in the kingdom of glory. In these emphatic words, Christ addresses the church: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Rev. 3:21.

THRONE OF THE FATHER.

The throne of the Father is the throne of the universe. David, speaking of this throne, says: "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the Heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all." Ps. 103:19. Daniel, speaking of the Ancient of Days, the eternal Father, says that "his throne was like the fiery flame." Chap.

7 : 9. And the Revelation, speaking of the birth of Christ, and his ascension to the Father, says : "And her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne." Chap. 12 : 5.

Christ will reign on the throne of the Father in the kingdom of grace until human probation shall close. David, speaking of this gracious reign, says : "The Lord said unto my Lord, 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. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Ps. 110 : 1-3. Peter speaks of Christ as "being by the right hand of God exalted." Acts 2 : 33. And Paul, speaking of the priesthood of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, says that "we have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the Heavens." Heb. 8 : 1. He exhorts the church to look to "Jesus the author and finisher of our faith ; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Chap. 12 : 2.

THRONE OF THE SON.

Christ will reign in the kingdom of glory forever. God speaks of the eternal kingdom of his Son by his servant David in these words : "His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established forever as the moon." Ps. 89 : 36, 37. And the angel speaking of Christ addresses Mary in these words : "He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest. And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his Father David ; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever ; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Luke 1 : 32, 33. At the close of human probation, Christ delivers up the kingdom of grace, which there has an end, 1 Cor. 15 : 24-28, and receives from the Father the immortal kingdom of glory.

THE TWO THRONES.



THE GREAT IMAGE.

The second chapter of Daniel introduces five universal kingdoms which were to succeed each other. The first four kingdoms are earthly and perishable. The fifth is immortal, and will stand forever. The first four kingdoms are represented by the great metallic image, the several parts of which are composed of gold, silver, brass, and iron mixed with clay. When these shall be broken in pieces, and entirely removed, then will the immortal kingdom fill the whole earth. We call attention to Dan. 2 : 31-45.

Verses 31, 36 : "Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee ; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors ; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them ; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. This is the dream ; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king."

Please notice these points in the dream, however, before considering the interpretation. The stone smote the image upon his feet, when the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold were broken in pieces, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them. No language can express destruction more completely. Then, and not till then, does the stone that smote the image become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth.

Verses 37, 38 : "Thou, O king, art a king of kings ;

for the God of Heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art [or thy kingdom is] this head of gold." Babylon was the first kingdom of universal empire. It was founded by Nimrod, the great grandson of Noah. See Gen. 10 : 8, 10. It lasted nearly seventeen hundred years, though under different names ; sometimes called Babylon, sometimes Assyria, and sometimes Chaldea. It continued from the time of Nimrod to that of Belshazzar, who was its last king.

Verse 39 (first part): "And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee." The Medo-Persian kingdom succeeded Babylon. See Chap. 5 : 28 : "Thy kingdom [Babylon] is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." The Medo-Persian was the second universal kingdom, represented by the breast and arms of silver.

Verse 39 (last part): "And another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth." In chap. 8 : 5, 7, 21, we learn that Grecia conquered the Medo-Persian kingdom, and became a kingdom of universal empire. This took place under Alexander. Here, then, we have the third kingdom, which is represented by the brass of the image.

Verse 40 : "And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron ; forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things ; and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise." The fourth kingdom is generally admitted to be Rome. It was a universal kingdom that was to break in pieces all that went before it. Rome alone answers the description. That did have universal empire. Luke 2 : 1 : "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be taxed," Cæsar Augustus was a Roman emperor,

Here we have the fourth kingdom, represented by the legs of iron.

Verse 41 (first part): "And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided." The Western Empire of Rome, between the years A. D. 356 and 483, was divided into ten divisions, or kingdoms: 1. The Huns, in Hungary, A. D. 356; 2. The Ostrogoths, in Mysia, 377; 3. The Visigoths, in Pannonia, 378; 4. The Franks, in France, 407; 5. The Vandals, in Africa, 407; 6. The Sueves and Alans, in Gascoigne and Spain, 407; 7. The Burgundians, in Burgundy, 407; 8. The Heruli and Rugii, in Italy, 476; 9. The Saxons and Angles, in Britain, 476; 10. The Lombards, in Germany, 483. Thus the kingdom was divided, as designated by the ten toes.

Verses 41-43 (beginning with the last part of verse 41): "But there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay."

This language is descriptive of the state of the kingdoms into which the fourth kingdom should be broken. Some of them should be strong as iron, and some feeble as clay. Yet as iron cannot be permanently united to clay, so the stronger kingdoms shall not be able to annex the weaker to themselves in a permanent union. Nor shall the intermarriage of the reigning families succeed in causing these kingdoms to cleave together. Next come the words of the texts, which distinctly point to the period of the setting up of God's imperishable kingdom:—

Verse 44: "And 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." The kings mentioned in the text are most certainly the ten kings, or ten kingdoms, of the divided fourth kingdom; for they are the subject of discourse. The phrase, "In the days of these kings," does not refer to the days of the kingdom of Babylon, of Media and Persia, of Greece, nor to the days of Rome before it was divided into ten kingdoms. But it does refer to Rome after it had been divided into ten kingdoms, represented by the ten toes of the image. Therefore the kingdom of God was not set up at the time of the first advent of Christ. Neither could it be set up, according to the text, until the Roman kingdom should be divided into the ten kingdoms, which division took place between the years A. D. 356 and 483. The setting up of this kingdom is evidently a future event.

The stone did not smite the image on the head, Babylon; nor on the breast, Media and Persia; nor on the sides, Greece; nor yet on the legs, Roman Pagan. But the stone did smite the image on his feet. It could not smite the feet before they existed, and they were not in being till several hundred years after the first advent of Jesus Christ. We still wait for the dashing of the image, or the destruction of all earthly governments, before the stone shall become a great mountain and fill the whole earth, or the immortal kingdom be fully established in the earth.

The stone has nothing in common with the image. Mark well the events here stated. The stone breaks the image, and it becomes like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, and the wind carries it away so that no place is found for it. All earthly kingdoms are first broken, and cease to exist; then, and not till then, does the stone fill the whole earth.

If it be said that the kingdom of grace was set up by our Lord Jesus Christ at his first advent, then we inquire, Had God no kingdom of grace before that time? If not, then Enoch, Noah, Lot, Abraham,

Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and the prophets, have perished without hope; for certainly no man can be saved without grace.

It is true that the phrase, "It shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms," gives the idea that the kingdom of God, for a time, is cotemporary with perishable kingdoms. And in view of this fact, many adopt the popular view of the spiritual reign of Christ, the conversion of the world, commonly called the temporal millennium. Some others, who reject the spiritual reign, suppose they have a stronghold in this phrase for the mixed millennium, the literal reign of Christ on the earth with the immortal righteous of all ages, among the mortal nations. But we reject both these views, as being opposed to the plainest declarations of the sacred Scriptures, and invite attention to one which we regard as scriptural and harmonious.

The establishment of the eternal kingdom is by a succession of events, the first of which occurs prior to the destruction of earthly governments.

1. The Son of God, at the close of his ministration for sinners, and before his second appearing, will receive the kingdom from the Father. In the seventh chapter of this prophetic book, we read these words: "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. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom, that which shall not be destroyed." Dan. 7:13, 14. This language describes a grand transaction in Heaven between the Father and the Son. The Son, at his second advent to this world, does not approach the Father. So far from this, that the apostle represents the Father as remaining in Heaven, and sending his Son. "And he [the Father] shall send

Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you." Acts 3 : 20.

The words of the psalmist are to the point : " Ask of me [says the Father to the Son], and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Ps. 2 : 8, 9. Before the Son makes his second advent to this world, he receives from the Father " dominion, and glory, and a Kingdom." The heathen are his, and the uttermost parts of the earth are his possession. Thus the God of Heaven sets up the kingdom by investing his Son with royal authority before sending him to manifest it in the earth among his enemies.

2. After the coronation of the King of Kings, the opening heavens will reveal him coming in grandeur and in glory, leading on the armies of Heaven to the last great conflict with the beast, the false prophet, and the Kings of the earth. See Rev. 19. " His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns." " And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, *King of kings, and Lord of lords.*" His mission then will be to " judge and make war." On one side will be the beast, and the kings of the earth and their armies ; and on the other side will be the King of kings, followed by all the holy angels. The armies of Heaven achieve a glorious victory. " And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth."

In Rev. 19, we see the complete destruction of all wicked men, or the dashing of the nations in pieces as a potter's vessel, or the image broken by the stone,

and utterly destroyed and removed, like the chaff before the wind. The destruction of the enemies of the Lord, represented by the several names of "man of sin," "mystery of iniquity," and "that wicked," is thus described by the apostle—"whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." 2 Thess. 2:8.

3. At the second advent of Christ, the righteous dead will be raised, the living righteous will be changed, and thus the subjects of the eternal kingdom will be made immortal. 1 Thess. 4:14-18; 1 Cor. 15:51, 55. This is the first resurrection at the commencement of the millennium.

4. The immortal subjects of the kingdom will ascend with their Lord to the eternal city, and reign with him in the judgment of the wicked a thousand years, during which time the earth will be desolate. We have seen from New-Testament testimony that all wicked men will be destroyed at the second advent. See 2 Thess. 1:7-9; 2:7, 8; Matt. 13:26-30, 37-43; 3:12; Luke 17:26-30. The prophets of the Old Testament clearly describe the desolation of the earth during the millennium. See Isa. 6:3-11; 13:9; 24:1-3; 34:1-15; 28:21, 22; Jer. 4:20, 27; 25:32-38; Zeph. 1:2, 3; 3:6-8.

5. At the close of the millennium, the wicked will be raised from the dead. "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Rev. 20:5. They will then be destroyed. "And fire came down from God out of Heaven, and devoured them." Rev. 20:9. Satan, and all the fallen angels, and all wicked men, will then be consumed by the fire of Jehovah's wrath. Rev. 20:10; Matt. 25:41; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6. In the general conflagration of that time, the old earth and atmospheric heaven will pass away from the face of Him that sitteth on the great white throne. Rev. 20:11. "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." 2 Pet. 3:10.

6. From the old earth, melted and cleansed from sin and sinners, will come forth, molded by the hand of the great Restorer, the new earth, free from all the marks of the curse. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away." Rev. 21:1.

It is at the close of the one thousand years of Revelation 20, after the final destruction of all of God's enemies, that the saints take the kingdom, to possess it forever, even forever and ever. Then will the kingdom in all its parts—the king, the subjects, the territory, the holy city being the metropolis—be complete. Then the stone will have become a great mountain, so as to fill the whole earth.

We have seen that the establishment of the immortal kingdom will be by a succession of events. The kingdom in its first stage, when set up in Heaven, by the God of Heaven, is represented by a stone cut of the mountain. When complete and fully established in the earth, it is represented by a mountain filling the whole earth. The kingdom, in its stone condition, is co-temporary for a while with the perishable kingdoms of this world. Hence it is said that "it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms." Dan. 2:44. This accomplished, and the earth restored to its Eden glory, the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, will be the eternal inheritance of the redeemed.

Contrast with this harmonious series of events in the establishment of the kingdom, that view which has the kingdom established on the earth when Christ comes, and the one-thousand-years' reign of Christ with his people on the new earth. That view necessarily has Satan let loose on the new earth, after the saints, with Christ in their midst, have enjoyed its glories for a thousand years! Then Satan's vast army,

“the number of whom is as the sand of the sea,” is raised from the dead out of the new earth! and, with Satan at their head, come tramping up over the fields of living green on the breadth of the new earth! to surround the city of the saints. And to crown the absurdity of this position, fire comes down from Heaven and consumes the vast multitude of the wicked of all ages upon the new earth! In our opinion, the inconsistencies of this view have led many to adopt the mixed millennium, and follow on in the almost endless fancies of the future age.

If it be objected that our view of the subject has the city of the redeemed resting upon the old earth before it shall be regenerated by fire, we reply: This may be in the plan of God, that all sinners may see what they have lost, that the redeemed may witness the terrors of that death from which they are saved, and that the assembled intelligences of the universe that have not sinned, may also be impressed with the holiness and dignity of the divine law, the penalty of which is death.

Tremendous execution! Satan and all the angels that revolted with him, and all men who have died in their sins, from the murderer, Cain, down to the last sinner that shall refuse salvation, perish in the lake of fire poured upon them as they gather around the city of the redeemed to take it. How fitting a place will the old world be—the marks of the curse now doubly visible—for this terrible execution.

“And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley.” *Ezek. 44:4.* At the close of the millennium, the Lord will stand upon the mount of his ascension; and, after his voice shall call forth the wicked dead, the mount will cleave asunder, leaving a plain sufficiently extensive to receive the New Jerusalem. Around this city, Satan and his vast

forces will gather to take it. And at the very moment of attack, fire from Heaven will come down upon them to that extent that the vast scene, necessarily covering a large portion of the old earth's surface, is represented as a lake of fire and brimstone. Then "the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also."

But whether that portion of the earth where the city shall rest, having been prepared by a miracle of divine power for the reception of the beloved city, will remain unaffected by the fires of that day; or whether the melting earth and heaven, fleeing from the face of Him that shall be seated on the great white throne, Rev. 20:11, shall be removed from the city during their regeneration by fire, may not be important to the present discussion of the subject. Either of these can be done by the power of Him who will do greater things in the grand work of the restitution.

THE WORD KINGDOM

Often occurs in the New Testament, and sometimes refers to the means and work of grace in the present state; and in other passages it evidently applies to the future immortal state. The terms used in the texts where the word occurs, and the connection, will decide the application.

The New-Testament writers at different periods speak of the immortal kingdom as future. It was not set up when our Lord taught his disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come." Matt. 6:10. The prophets, Christ, and the apostles, all point the church forward to the coming and kingdom of Christ as the time of the consummation of her faith and hope, the end of her toils and sorrows, and the fullness of her joys. Hence, in the pattern prayer of the Christian church of all ages, is the petition, "Thy kingdom come."

The mother of Zebedee's children understood the kingdom to be future when she desired our Lord to grant that her two sons might sit, "the one on the

right hand and the other on the left," in his kingdom. Matt. 20 : 20, 21.

Again the kingdom was still future when our Lord ate the last passover with the twelve. He said to them, "I say unto you I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come." Luke 22 : 18.

But did not Christ set up the kingdom before his ascension to Heaven? Just before his ascension, the disciples inquired, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" It was not then set up. Both Jesus and Paul associate the kingdom with the second advent. Jesus addresses those who are waiting for his coming and kingdom, thus : "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately." Luke 12 : 35, 36. In this connection he comforts his people with these precious words : "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Verse 32. And Paul solemnly charges Timothy "before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom." 2 Tim. 4 : 1.

Paul took a preaching tour, A. D. 46, to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, "confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God." Acts 14 : 21, 22. This address was not made less than twelve years after the day of Pentecost to those who were already Christians, enjoying the blessings of the kingdom of grace. There was still before them the kingdom of glory, to enter through much tribulation. How say some that the kingdom was set up on the day of Pentecost?

James addresses his epistle to the scattered brethren, A. D. 60, not less than twenty-five years after the day of Pentecost. These were all in the kingdom of

grace at that time, and yet he presents the kingdom of glory before them as a matter of promise. He says: "Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath *promised* to them that love him?" James 2:5.

And the apostle Peter writes his second general epistle to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, not less than thirty years after the complete establishment of the Christian church. He exhorts those who had "obtained like precious faith" to add to their faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity, that an entrance might be ministered unto them abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Pet. 1:5-11.

And Paul declares that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Cor. 15:50. This settles the question that there is a kingdom not to be enjoyed by the saints till they put on immortality, or till they enter the immortal state, which the apostle says, verse 52, is "at the last trump."

THE KINGDOM IN MINIATURE.

The miniature exhibition of the kingdom of God at the transfiguration is designed to show the nature of the kingdom, and when it will be set up. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily, I say unto you, There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." Matt. 16:27, 28. Or, as it reads in Luke, "Till they see the kingdom of God." Chap. 9:27.

This promise was soon fulfilled on the mount. "And after six days, Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high

mountain apart, and was transfigured before them ; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here ; if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them ; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye him." Matt. 17 : 1-5. Notice the following points :—

1. Jesus Christ appeared in his own personal glory. His countenance shone like the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

2. The glory of the Father was there. It was a "bright cloud" of the divine glory, out of which came the Father's voice.

3. Moses and Elias appeared ; the one, the representative of those saints who shall be raised at Christ's coming and clothed with glory ; the other, Elias, the representative of those who will be alive and be changed at the appearing of Christ.

4. The use the apostles made of the scene. Peter was one of the witnesses ; and his testimony shows that the design of the transfiguration was to illustrate Christ's second, personal, glorious coming and the future kingdom of glory, and that this kingdom will be set up at the period of the second advent, and the resurrection and change of the just to immortal life. He says : "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from Heaven we heard when

we were with him in the holy mount." 2 Pet. 1 : 16-18.

THE KINGDOM OF GRACE.

As we have before stated, the Kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory have a close relation to each other. The design of the former is to prepare subjects for the latter. And, although they are distinct, and in many respects different, yet their relation to each other is such that they are sometimes mentioned in the New Testament in very close connection. This is the case in the parable of the

WHEAT AND THE TARES.

"The kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn." Matt. 13 : 24-30.

This parable applies to the present imperfect state, when sinners need, and may enjoy, the means of grace. It cannot apply to the future state of glory. There are, however, two references to the future kingdom in Christ's explanation of this parable, which are indicated by the words supplied in brackets.

"He answered and said unto them, He that soweth

the good seed is the Son of man. The field is the world. The good seed are the children of the kingdom. . But the tares are the children of the wicked one. The enemy that sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world. And the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out [of the territory] of his [future] kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire. . There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the [eternal] kingdom of their Father." Verses 37-43.

The sowing mentioned in this parable did not commence at the first advent of the Son of God. The children of the kingdom and the children of the wicked one both appeared long before Jesus died for sinners. Abel and Cain represented the two classes. During the entire period from the time of these sons of Adam to the close of the day of grace, this parable has a clear and forcible application.

GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED.

"The kingdom of Heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field; which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." Verses 31, 32. This parable forcibly illustrates the kingdom of grace, embracing at first only our first parents immediately after the fall, and finally, in its grand results, embracing all the redeemed of every age, and from every land.

PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN.

The parable of the leaven hid in three measures of meal illustrates the work of grace in the entire be-

ing. "The kingdom of Heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." Verse 33. This parable teaches the sanctification of the spirit, soul, and body, to God. The apostle expresses this sentiment when he says, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. 5:23.

THE HIDDEN TREASURE.

"Again, the kingdom of Heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." Verse 44. This parable illustrates the joyful state of mind of those who experience the blessings of the kingdom of grace.

PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.

"Again, the kingdom of Heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." Verses 45, 46. The purchase of the pearl of great price represents the immense cost of salvation through Jesus Christ, and the sacrifices that should be made to obtain it.

THE GOSPEL NET.

"Again the kingdom of Heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind; which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world; the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Verses 47-50. This parable shows that although

both good and bad men may be gathered by the gospel and remain in apparent union for a time, as was the case with Judas and the eleven, the final separation will come that will declare the true character of all.

THE TEN VIRGINS.

In Matthew 25, the kingdom of Heaven is likened to an Eastern marriage. This parable illustrates the action of the church just before, and not after, the second advent. "Then shall the kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom." In this connection our Lord points to a specific time, in which the work of divine grace upon the minds and hearts of believers would give them an experience that would be likened to an Eastern marriage.

BLESSINGS OF THE KINGDOM.

The apostle speaks of the blessings of the kingdom of grace thus: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Rom. 14:17. The connection shows that Paul applies the word kingdom to the present dispensation, and not to the future period of reward.

The mental struggle in order to break away from the powers of darkness, and by faith receive the blessings of the kingdom of grace, is thus described by our Lord: "And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Matt. 11:12. See Luke 16:16.

THE KINGDOM AT HAND.

John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Matt. 3:1, 2. "Now after

that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent ye, and believe the gospel." Mark 1:14, 15. And as Jesus sent forth the twelve to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, he said to them, "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Matt. 10:5-7.

We have now reached a very important point in the discussion of this subject. Many will meet us here with the popular view that the kingdom was set up at the time of the first advent. They will use the phrase, "The kingdom of Heaven is at hand," expressed by John, Jesus, and the twelve, with force upon the minds of those who do not study the subject in all its bearings. But, as we have shown, in no sense of the word whatever was the kingdom set up at the time of the first advent of Christ. The words, "kingdom of Heaven," and "kingdom of God," have but two significations: first, the plan to save men by grace; and, secondly, the future condition and reward of the saved. The plan of salvation, or the kingdom of grace, was instituted soon after the fall; and the reward of the saved, or the kingdom of glory, is future.

The Greek word translated "at hand," as used by Jesus, John, and the twelve, is *enggizo*, and is defined by Greenfield as follows: "To approach, draw near. By metonymy, to be at hand, to impend. Matt. 5:2; 4:17; 10:7; Luke 10:9, 11; Mark 1:15." The immortal kingdom was not at hand, according to this definition, or the obvious meaning of the phrase, in the days of John and of Jesus. In fact, Paul warned the church at Thessalonica against the idea that the day of Christ—the day to destroy earthly kingdoms, and establish the immortal kingdom—was even then at hand. "Be not soon shaken in mind," says the apostle, "or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand." 2 Thess. 2:2,

The Greek word translated "at hand" in this text is *enistemi*, and signifies, according to Greenfield, "to place in, or upon; to stand near, be at hand, impend. 2 Thess. 2: 2." In their bearing upon the subject of the kingdom, there is really no difference in the signification of these two Greek words. But, does Paul contradict John, Jesus, or the twelve? Certainly he does not.

What, then, did John and Jesus mean in proclaiming the kingdom of Heaven at hand? Not that the kingdom of grace was soon to be set up. No; that had been instituted more than four thousand years before that proclamation. Neither did they urge immediate repentance on the ground that the kingdom of Heaven was at hand in the sense of being the next universal kingdom! With this view, their fervent announcement would seem to lose its force. But their proclamation had direct reference to the wonderful manifestations of divine power and grace immediately to follow, during the work of confirming the covenant; Dan. 9: 27; first, by Christ, for three and a half years, and by the apostles, Heb. 2: 3, the same period of time.

John looked forward to the ministry of Jesus, which was approved of God "by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him." Acts 2: 22, and proclaimed the kingdom of Heaven at hand. And Jesus looked forward to his own ministry, and also to that of the apostles as "they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following," Mark 16: 20, and proclaimed the kingdom of Heaven at hand. This view of the subject is sustained by the commission given by our Lord to the seventy: "Go your ways. Behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." Luke 10: 3,

8, 9. The kingdom of God in this connection can mean nothing more, and nothing less, than the manifestation of divine power and grace.

And with this agree the words of Christ addressed to the worthy scribe. "And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." Mark 12 : 34. This scribe was sound in the fundamental principles of God's government. He only needed to know Christ and the power of his great salvation, in order to enjoy all the privileges and blessings of the kingdom of grace.

THE FIRST ADVENT.

The Pharisees supposed the kingdom of Israel would then be established with outward show. "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for behold the kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17 : 20, 21. But was the kingdom within the unbelieving Pharisees? The marginal reading—"among you"—helps the case. What was then among them? Christ had just cleansed ten lepers who showed themselves to the priests, and one of them returned to give glory to God. In their midst were the wonderful manifestations of divine power and grace in the miracles of Christ; hence, he said to the Pharisees, "The Kingdom of God is among you." The work of divine grace was manifested among them.

Deception has been the work of Satan ever since he so successfully deceived Eve. He led the Jews to expect in the Messiah a ruling monarch, instead of a meek and lowly teacher, and finally the sacrifice for sinners.

THE SECOND ADVENT.

At the time of the second advent, and the establishment of the eternal kingdom, the people will doubtless

be under as great deception relative to the nature of the coming and kingdom of Christ, as the Jews were relative to his mission at his first advent. Then he came as the humble teacher of the people, closing his mission with giving himself a sacrifice for sinners. The Jews rejected Jesus because he did not meet their vain expectations. Satan led them to look for the coming of Messiah with outward show, and grandeur, when he was to come in humility. And now that he is soon to appear the second time, in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, to raise the righteous dead, and reign in his tangible kingdom forever, Satan has the delusion prepared for the people, that Christ's coming is spiritual, at death, at conversion, or in the outpouring of the Spirit of God. Jesus anticipates the heresies of our time, and says: "The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, See here! or, see there! go not after them nor follow them. For as the lightning that lighteth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day." Luke 17: 22-24.

In close connection with the establishment of the future immortal kingdom will be the second coming of Christ with power and great glory. This prophetic event does not have its fulfillment in a plurality of ways each differing from all the rest, as in the popular applications to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army, to conversion and to death. These mystical applications are expressed by the words of our Lord, "See here, or, see there," while the one grand event of the second advent is illustrated by the lightning that flashes across the entire heavens.

Christ, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, in his own glory, and in the glory of the Father, attended by all the holy angels, will descend. The earth will tremble, and the heavens will blaze with glory. The voice of the Son of God will call the righteous dead from

their graves, and the living righteous will be changed. These will be gathered from all parts of the earth, up to meet their descending Lord. "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Matt. 24 : 31. The saints of all ages and from all countries and nations, will be in that vast gathering. "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of Heaven." Matt. 8 : 11. These will be the immortal subjects of the eternal kingdom. But if this kingdom is already set up in any one church, or in all the Christian churches of our time, where are these patriarchs? Search as closely as you please among the followers of Luther, Calvin, Wesley, or Alex. Campbell, and you positively cannot find Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But when the righteous dead shall all be raised and gathered home to their everlasting rest, the prophets and saints of all ages will meet in the grand assemblage of the redeemed, and together sit down in the kingdom of God, with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in their midst.

THE KINGDOM COMPLETE.

In a kingdom there are, necessarily, a king, subjects, territory, and government. The sacred Scriptures speak of these component parts of the eternal kingdom of glory in plainest terms. Christ will be King, the immortal just will be the subjects, the whole earth restored from the curse will be the territory, and the holy city, Rev. 21 : 10-25, will be the metropolis, and seat of government.

When Pilate inquired of Jesus, "Art thou a king?" he answered, "To this end was I born." John 18 : 37. The import of this reply of the Son of God is more clearly seen by the light of these prophetic words ; "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son

is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder. And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever." Isa. 9 : 6, 7.

The prophet takes in at a glance, as briefly expressed, the birth of Christ, his wonderful teachings, the might of his miracles, and his future reign as the "Prince of Peace," which will have "no end." The Jews applied the entire prophecy to their limited ideas of the coming of the Messiah. And most Christians of our time extend it but little beyond the work of grace in the present age. But the burden of the prophecy is certainly the future kingdom. It evidently touches the stream of time at the birth and life of Christ, and passes along down to the establishment of the immortal kingdom, and out to the eternal sea of Christ's glorious reign.

The cheering declaration of the angel to anxious Mary is nearly a repetition of the words of the prophet, in announcing Christ as the King in the endless reign of future glory. After stating that his name should be called Jesus, he adds: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest. And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Luke 1 : 32, 33.

Christ now reigns in the kingdom of divine grace in behalf of sinful men. But at the close of human probation he will deliver up the mediatorial kingdom to the Father, when the reign of grace and mercy for a lost world will end. "Then cometh the end, 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." 1 Cor. 15 :

24, 25. He will then receive from the Father the eternal kingdom of glory. Says Daniel: "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. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Chap. 7:13, 14. And the prophet speaks of the immortal and eternal subjects of this kingdom in these words: "But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever." Verse 18.

But it is not until all the wicked of the earth shall be destroyed from off it that the immortal kingdom of glory will fill the whole-renewed earth, which will be the eternal inheritance of the saints. Then will be fulfilled the words of David: "For yet a little while and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." Ps. 37:10, 11. And it is to this same glory and reward that Christ points in his sermon on the mount, when he says: "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth." Matt. 5:5.

The prophet Daniel is assured by the angel that "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." Chap. 7:27. And the great God, in response to the earnest prayer of Moses who was leading the children of Israel to the land of Canaan, the type of the kingdom of glory, says: "But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." Num. 14:21. Isaiah takes up the promise of the future reward and glory in these words: "The earth shall be full of the knowledge

of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Chap. 11 : 9. And another prophet repeats the promise in still stronger language : "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Hab. 2 : 14.

FITNESS FOR THE FUTURE KINGDOM.

But in order to enter the future kingdom of glory we must first be in the kingdom of grace, sharing all its blessings and privileges. The faithful John bears testimony which has direct bearing on this subject. He looked forward to the new heaven and the new earth, and the holy city, in the glorious restitution where there will be neither pain, sickness, sorrow nor death, as the eternal kingdom of the redeemed. And yet he declared himself, while in the present state of tribulation, as being in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." Rev. 1 : 9. The beloved John was in the kingdom of grace.

And Paul, in delineating true Christian experience in his epistle to the Colossians, speaks of deliverance from the power of darkness, a redemption through Christ's blood, and a translation into his kingdom, which can apply only to the present probationary state. He sets forth the emancipation from the bondage of spiritual darkness into the light and liberty of the sons of God, and the attainments which believers may reach in fullness of spiritual understanding and of strength, in order to a moral fitness to be partaker of the eternal inheritance, in words that should stir the soul and burn their way to every Christian heart.

"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all

wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord. unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Col. 1:9-14. The words delivered, translated, and redemption, may usually express transition to the immortal state; but in the foregoing quotation they express the power and work of grace in connection with the forgiveness of sins.

The moral fitness for the next life must be attained in this life. The last change to immortality is not a moral change. It is simply an exchange of the corruptible body for one that will be incorruptible. This is expressed by the apostle thus: "For our conversation is in Heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body."

The exchange of the sinner's vile nature to the glorious character of the Son of God must take place during the period of probation, while Christ pleads his blood before the Father on the sinner's account. If this change does not take place while Christ is our mediator, the change of the vile body will not take place at his second advent. Now the sinner may, in obedience to the law of the Father, and by faith in the blood of the Son, attain to the moral fitness for the inheritance of the saints in light.

Our robes of character must be made pure before Christ lays off his garments of mediation, and puts on his kingly robes. Now we may wash and be clean; but when Christ's mediation for sinners shall cease, it

will then be said, "The time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. 22:10-12. And Peter exhorts: "Wherefore, beloved, seeing ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." 2 Pet. 3:14. This washing of the soul from the stains of sin demands diligence. Paul says that "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." Eph. 5:25-27.

And John sees the washed and glorified multitude, who had pressed their way to Christ and Heaven through the moral darkness of this world, and had come out of great tribulation into the kingdom of glory. "After this, I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb; clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Rev. 7:9, 10. "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Verses 13, 14.

J. W.

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