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CHARLES HODGE, D.D.

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* This title has been misprinted in the heading of the article.

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No. III.

ARTICLE I.—*The Kingdom of Christ.**

THE art and mystery of our religious life consists in the exercise of faith. The faith which is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, has, by its nature, a claim to supreme authority in man, and always tends, like the conscience among the moral faculties, towards entire predominance. It proposes, as the most excellent of possible attainments on earth, that we shall walk by faith and not by sight, and becomes in us the power and the desire to live as seeing Him who is invisible.

It is the chief design of the things that are seen to help us in conceiving and enjoying the things that are not seen. Our Lord Jesus Christ appeared in the flesh to aid us in realizing that he lives in the Spirit. The imaginative powers which blend themselves so readily with our religious faith, are stimulated to conceive more vividly what is behind a visible veil, than what is described as in its nature invisible. The mercy-seat in the Jewish tabernacle, which was veiled from the people,

* The following article is an enlarged form of the discourse of the Rev. Dr. Yeomans, at the opening of the late General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia.

was more of a reality to them while thus associated with that visible veil, than if described to them as a thing which from its nature could not be seen. We have a clearer conception of the invisible vapour when we have just seen its visible image in the cloud. The disciples, at the ascension of the Lord, still looked steadfastly towards heaven as he went up, and after the cloud had received him out of their sight. The quickening image of their Lord, with which they had been so long familiar, and which had now vanished from before their open eyes, was leaving in them the living conception of the invisible Spirit which his earthly form had represented.

On this principle we may explain in part the great power of our Lord's discourse on the invisible world. He stands before his people, the living, earthly image of what is not seen. Not only has he the lively and unwavering consciousness of truth, in speaking of the kingdom of life he represents; but he embodies in himself its power and glory. Appearing as he did in this world, in the form of a servant, in full sympathy with the earthly experience of humanity, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross, yet claiming to be a king, and in the act of administering his kingdom, as if its powers were in the world invisible, and its visible motions before the eyes of men, he had but one presumption to save his course from being, not an enigma or a mystery only, but an absurdity. It was the presumption that he was the Son of God, revealing in himself the perfection of God, and the Son of man, revealing in himself the perfection of man; that his character and teachings presented to men the system of universal and eternal righteousness and truth; that his life on earth, with all the doctrines it involved, all the interests it upheld, all the powers it exerted, and all the movements it originated, was a part of the great system of Divine operation to which all earthly things belong—one of the representative and guiding movements of the universal scheme.

Hence, with the same freedom with which he spoke of having come down from heaven, he spoke also of administering, while *in* the world, a kingdom which was not of this world. All who saw and heard him must have observed that he was conversant with things visible and things invisible, with equal familiarity,

and at the same time. And as he so evidently ruled worldly phenomena by direct and immediate control of their invisible powers, he invites the earnest and rational endeavour of the human race to conceive and define the relation between them, by the help of his revelations. It is one of those mysteries which thought converses with better than language, and faith better than logic. All the scriptural ideas of the things not seen partake largely of the experience of faith; that general state of the soul which the Saviour calls "doing the will of God," in order to "know the doctrine." It is only by a living and loving communion of faith among the disciples of Christ that they can establish a clear view of these high themes that shall be common to them all, and unite them in the same mind and in the same judgment.

The Saviour was accused before Pilate of having spoken treasonable words against the Roman government, and of saying that he himself is Christ, a king. That he is a king he does not deny. But his defence relates to the nature of his kingdom. He pleads that his kingdom, as to its principles, its tendencies, and its aims, did not interfere with the rights or powers of the civil ruler. The defence prevails with Pilate. It satisfies him that Jesus was innocent of all design against the government; that nothing asserted or implied in his claims was of any treasonable import, and that all the bearing of his doctrine and his course of life upon the empire would tend rather to preserve than to subvert its order and prosperity. "My kingdom is not of this world."

The value of this defence depended on the ideas it involved respecting this world, the kingdom of Christ, and their relation to one another. And these same ideas, clearly conceived and steadily preserved under the influence of Christian faith, are important to the universal and perpetual edification of the church.

1. The most general idea of this world in Scripture is that of the visible system of earthly things with the invisible forces or laws which immediately govern them. It is limited to the human race, when conceived as the world which God will judge; and to the ungodly portion, when viewed as the world for which the Saviour does not pray. It varies, also, to represent

the corrupting influence opposed to the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, as when Jesus says, "I have overcome the world." It thus comes to represent the spirit of the natural man as distinguished from the regenerating Spirit of Christ, which dwells in his people. In this, its most usual import in the New Testament, this world is conceived as an organized antagonist of God, with a leader or prince of its own, a nature essentially alien from righteousness, which is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can be. Whatever is friendly to it is enmity against God. The people of God are called out of it. Its enmity is to be overcome, its tendencies reversed, its results destroyed as the works of the devil.

It thus appears in hostility to Christ and his kingdom. "The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth; because I testify that the works thereof are evil. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, and I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." The idea of enmity is more obscure, when the Saviour prays, for instance, not that the Father would take them out of the world; and says, "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world; that the world may know that thou hast sent me." And it thus shades off into greater obscurity in our text—"My kingdom is not of this world;" but it does not wholly disappear, for even Pilate must have caught a glimpse of evil in the world into which Jesus must come to bear witness unto the truth.

However closely this world is joined to things invisible, it is yet this world, and not that; and is conceived as here, and not there; appears as living and moving in a sphere of its own, where its power is claimed to be supreme, and might be admitted to be so; not essentially evil, yet the sphere where all evil belongs, so far as it is manifest to men on earth. For the essential evil in the world is in man; and thus this world as evil, signifies only the invisible spirit of man. There it initiates all its motions in the world, unfolds all its phenomena, propagates all its progeny. There is the shrine of the god of this world, the court of its prince, the fortress of its strength. From that it is to be dislodged, and the entire evacuation of

that stronghold of sin by the powers of darkness will finish the regeneration of the world.

Man, therefore, considered in his natural state, and controlled by the forces of nature in distinction from those of the renewing Spirit, is the essential element of this world—man, considered also as holding dominion over many important changes of visible things. The words did not convey all this idea to Pilate, but they served the Saviour's purpose with Pilate, and were not spoken for him only, but for all people.

2. The kingdom of Christ, in contrast with this world, is a sphere in which Christ rules; where his reign is viewed, not merely as prospective, but as actual, and in full force. "Thou sayest that I am a king." This seeming concession does not admit the charge of the Jews against him. Their meaning and his were wide as the poles apart. But the admission opens into a glorious and blessed mystery. Not a king in prospect merely, but at the moment in possession of his throne, and all its prerogatives; not then suspended from any right of royalty, or really obstructed in any exercise of sovereignty he chose to employ, he was doing his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. He never was, and never will be more truly king than when he made himself of no reputation among men. Never was his majesty more resplendent and adorable to spiritual eyes than in his servant form, and the temptation and infirmity of his earthly condition. Never was his crown more brilliant, and honoured with a more ardent and unfeigned devotion, than while the head that wore it had not where to rest. Never was his power more active, or effective in controlling rebellion in his dominions, than in that dark hour when he was reached and smitten by wicked hands, and crushed under the shame and anguish of the cross. And when was victory so complete, so manifest and irreversible, as when he rose from the grave, because he could not be holden of it, as the dawn of that glorious morning calmly and silently rose, because it could not be holden of the night. "Thou sayest that I am a king;" but knowest thou what sort of king I am; and that thou couldst have no power against me except it were given thee from above? "I am a king;" and he

expresses his claim, and his full possession of dominion over the realm of created things. It takes in this world itself.

But the kingdom is not the mere realm of earthly phenomena. Whether Cæsar is a legitimate sovereign or a usurper, whether he reigns in righteousness or in iniquity, whether he seeks the good of his people or his own glory, is the question he has not come now to decide. His coming is not as one of the natural phenomena of the world to disturb and displace other phenomena; applying superficial correctives to outward disorders, though with the whole system of earthly things he is unavoidably concerned, and holds over it entire control. This satisfies Pilate. It was enough for the law he was to administer that Jesus did not claim a worldly jurisdiction within the dominions of Cæsar; that he raised no political questions; that he would not be a judge or a divider among men, and had nothing to say of the right or the wrong of the civil power. All these matters will come before him in their time and form. All possessors and claimants of inheritance, all holders of empire, have their accounts to settle with him, and will receive due attention from him in due time. Let Cæsar finish his reign, and let his subjects render unto him the things that are his. Let alleged injustice keep the inheritance, or let this world right its own wrong; let the adulteress be stoned, where the law requires it, or go unpunished as the powers may decide. He comes not to interpose in the outward details of human action, to watch and regulate motions of sin. The period for such tampering with human depravity is past. The dead ought still to be buried as ever; but let the dead bury them, and in their own way. There is no more legislation for degenerates. Christ comes not into the world with a policy of mere restraint, or regulation for sin, or a proposal to reform one or another particular abuse. If he purges the temple, it is not to restore the building from outward defilement, or profanation, but to enforce spiritual truth and duty. He sets no watchmen there, and his end is gained, though as soon as he is gone the traffickers were back again. He had a word for worldly ears on prayer, and the duty and the means of maintaining it; and his gestures among the seats and tables of the money-changers would impress his

word on the memory, if they did not write on the heart. Thus plain it is that the kingdom in which Christ is really ruling is something distinct from this world. We see that, while moving in the midst of visible things, his thoughts are in another region. His kingdom, therefore, should be conceived as the system of created powers, lying deeper among the things not seen than even those invisible causes which immediately govern the changes of the material creation. This world—a series of changing forms, a scroll to be rolled together, a panorama moving by silent unseen powers before the eye of sense—is all to pass away. The kingdom of Christ will still abide. It is the great world of reality, as distinct from this world which is appearance only. It is the world of truth as compared with all that is frail and false. This is the broad sense of the terms, as used in our text; and wherever that kingdom is spoken of in Scripture, as the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven, though restricted by its connection to some particular earthly phase in which it may reveal itself under one covenant or another, it still does not anywhere disclaim this comprehensive character.

Consider, then, this great defence of our Lord. Could any human mind have conceived it, but that which was dwelling with the Spirit of God in him. Would any mere man have ventured to use it, except one who “had a devil and was mad.” “I am a king; a visible embodiment of eternal authority and power. Yet in appearance so weak that thou hast power to crucify me, and power to release me. Of my chosen followers, one is a devil, and has betrayed me; another is a liar, and has denied me; and the rest have forsaken me and fled. But I have truth to testify, and if thou art of the truth, thou wilt hear my words.” To all this, so considerately spoken before a heathen magistrate, is to be added what he said more freely before the Jewish council; I am the Christ, the Son of God; and hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

3. The two ideas of the world and the kingdom of Christ, thus distinguished from one another, are still to be taken together in a mutual connection which is indissoluble and vital. The relations of the kingdom of Christ to this world, are sug-

gested by his appearing in the world to conduct an important part of his administration; by the truth he testified for the world concerning his kingdom; by the character and appointed service of his followers in the world; by his view of the connection of his kingdom with the course of earthly change; and by his assurance of its universal manifestation in the earth.

(1.) Why is the king on the earth, on the business of a kingdom which is not of this world?

He did not originate here, like the kings of this world. He was not born to grow up like them to the inheritance of their empire. He was born, not that he might become a king, but because he was a king. He held his throne before he appeared on the earth, and before the world was. And the concerns of his administration brought him hither. This is not indeed the seat of his government, the centre from which his authority radiates, the sphere in which his sceptre holds immediate sway. His throne has not its pillars amidst the natural, and superficial powers of this world. It is not built on this vapour, and therefore cannot be shaken, though the earth be removed, and the mountains be cast into the depths of the sea. He comes into this world of commotion from a kingdom which cannot be moved. This was his word for Pilate and for all men. Hea-then as Pilate is, with enough of the dim light of heathenism to understand that there are things not seen, but not enough of gospel light to perceive "what is truth" concerning them, anxious and bewildered from what he sees and hears, he still discerns clearly these two things: That Jesus meditated nothing against the civil government, and might be justly and safely released; and that this King and this kingdom were matters of too grave and solemn import to be hastily and rashly dealt with. His own prudence, and the dream of his wife, admonished him to take the safer side. He pleads with the accusers to forbear and consent to the release. He washes his hands of the innocent blood before the multitude. And though he compromises his manliness at last, through fear of the Jews, he proves the deep hold of that defence of Jesus on his mind. That kingdom which was not of this world had an import for him. The visible presence of the king whom he knew not, brought with it a special and peculiar activity of the power of the king-

dom where its words were spoken, and where its works were done. Distinguish it as we may from this world, its Sovereign is here conducting its affairs. His personal presence on earth changes none of his relations, signifies no enlargement of his sphere of operation, but shows him to men as he is employed in his administration when not seen among them. He appears as in his own realm, on ground over which his power is exercised in fact and by right; in territory where his reign can no more be resisted or disputed, than in the heaven from which he comes. His kingdom is not of this world, but this world is of his kingdom. He has come from the invisible seat of his government; from the centre to one of the extremities; an extremity which derives from the centre all its life and power. He comes, with a fulness of grace and truth, to restore what had here been lost; to recover to loyalty those who had revolted. With all things delivered unto him by his Father, he takes a manifest place amidst the superficial changes of this border, this shadowy outline of his kingdom, with all the unsearchable and glorious prerogatives of his invisible throne. In presence and manner he appears as not on alien ground, but in his own dominions; moving amidst phenomena brought forth by the principles and powers in the heavenly places over which he immediately rules.

(2.) He indicates the relation of his kingdom to this world by his testimony concerning the truth: "My kingdom is not of this world; but to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness unto the truth." Apart from the import of his testimony concerning his affairs, there is great significance in the fact, that a kingdom which is not of this world, but belongs essentially among the things which are not seen and eternal, should demand the attention of mankind to a statement of its principles and aims; that he who comes in the fulness of grace for men to accept, should also appear in the fulness of truth for men to know; and truth, which men must know in order to be saved. A voice goes before him—Hear ye him. And whosoever will not hear this prophet shall be cut off from among his people. He comes with a claim to attention, founded in his own nature—the nature of the truth he testifies, and the nature of

man. He makes it life for men to receive his testimony, and death for them to reject it. If he had not spoken, they had not had sin. He demands reverence for the authority with which he communicates truth; he claims gratitude and love for his kindness in this testimony; for his compassion towards them as victims of fatal delusion amidst the false and the vain; as those who are themselves a lie, and deceived to their ruin by the father of lies. His kingdom has power with men through knowledge. Its invitations hold upon the living spirit of truth in men; those inmost affinities which make the earnest soul revolt against delusion, and dread to be misled by falsehood. Its authority presupposes a genial and happy submission in the creature, whose true freedom is found in knowing and obeying the truth. And it works like the test of a refiner's fire—proving, by its acceptance or rejection, who are of the truth; who will give heed to the law written in their hearts, and who will stupidly yield to the law of sin which is in their members.

Have men no concern with such a witness? His kingdom is not of this world; and this may quiet Cæsar's fear for his political rights. It does not concern itself directly with the existing relations of earthly phenomena to one another. But does this deprive Cæsar, or any one else, of all valuable interest in that kingdom, or relieve him from all concern about it? True, it is not of this world; but what if this world is of it? What if Cæsar, in the full security of his throne, and the unruffled peace of his realm, should perceive it rising into power within him and around him, like an atmosphere of righteousness and truth? For this his witness-bearing is like the light from the east, that shineth even unto the west; and no eyes can be wholly closed against it.

It is also significant, that the King himself is the witness, suggesting what sort of king he is, and the manner of his administration; teaching men what they have to repent of—that while he was always among them, they knew him not. For his being in the world, and his coming, are not the same thing. The one is a universal and perpetual fact, to be recognized or ignored by all men—"the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." The other, a visible appear-

ance to his own, to be rejected by them, or received and presented through them to the world—a fact local and temporary. He comes from heaven, where he dwelt from eternity with the Father. He shows himself as a model of the heavenly life. He makes it a part of his kingly administration to reveal himself with his fulness of the Godhead, and his self-sacrificing love for sinners. While truly a king, to subdue his people, to rule and defend them, and to restrain and conquer both his and their enemies, he is the light of his people, and the light of the world. He must come as the revelation of the character and will of God for our salvation. He must be set forth as the only Mediator between God and man, to propitiate and to intercede; and must illustrate before his people the fact and the manner of his mediation. Were he like other kings, he might maintain his sway over this portion of his dominions without being known; but in his appointed modes of exercising his kingly power, he becomes also the prophet and the priest of his people. His teaching, his atonement, his intercession, are all royal; all sovereign executions of his will, in his one relation as head of his kingdom. For his kingdom is a kingdom of life. He rules as a living power—a power of life. Were his kingdom only an outward organization, administered by laws and forces not of itself, his ruling office would not include such spiritual functions as he now performs; and there would be no call for his personal appearance as a witness for the truth. The needful knowledge of his kingdom would come in the natural way. In the course of his providence, he executes his will among men in a way which requires, in many matters, no knowledge at all; and in others, only such as they can learn by experience and observation. But the full spiritual development of the powers of his kingdom includes the discernment and enjoyment of the truth concerning himself and the heavenly world. Of this truth he only can testify. It is he alone who can reveal the fact, that he was from eternity with God, and can bear witness of that eternal existence, as of that which he doth know, and which he hath seen.

Israel was now to know the spiritual bread on which the fathers fed in the wilderness, and the spiritual rock that followed them, from which they drank the flowing water. All

coming generations of believers were now to know who it was that the saints of old believed and trusted, though he was not personally revealed; and they are to keep this testimony ever before them, in the increasing light of the advancing ages, that they may know whom they themselves believe. "I said, Behold me, behold me! to them that asked not after me." And now that mighty power which thus broke forth in prophecy, and which had so long been working redemption, unseen and unknown, comes out into open view—showing itself in the person of a King, the head and embodiment of a kingdom of life. He bears witness of the truth by engraving his own spiritual likeness on the face of the world. The Lord our righteousness is now revealed. The propitiation for the sins of the world is now set forth.

Hence the spirit of the gospel becomes the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding in the knowledge of him. Believers in Christ not only know that there is such a person as Christ; they know Christ himself. They not only know that there is life; they know the life. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." "The life was manifest, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." We then hear that same Spirit of the gospel from within, exclaiming, "I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I suffer the loss of all things, . . . that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection. . . . I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment." Thus comes forth to the full knowledge of men, that power which had been working among them for ages. They know what it has done; they feel what it is doing now; they know what to expect of it in time to come. And we receive this knowledge as a revelation of the mystery of the world. All that he testifies concerning his kingdom, as being not of this world, as really concerns this world, as though the two were one. He comes as from the bosom of the world, when he appears upon it; and shows himself as the quickening Spirit of all living creatures, but manifest only in the conscious intelligence of man. He is

the King who can say, "My kingdom is not of this world;" and yet can also say, "My kingdom is within you." It is the glory of Christ, at the head of his kingdom, that he filleth all things.

He rules his kingdom as a system of living power flowing entirely from himself. He is the fountain of its being. Its essence is the offspring of his own nature. Its powers represent his energy; its motions his will. Its outward organization is the form of its appearance in the world, put on for its temporal purposes, as the earthly body for the temporal purposes of the soul. He himself, as the man Jesus, is the perfect manifestation of the life of his kingdom; all other forms of the spiritual life, which have appeared in the world, are but approximations towards his model. From the first generation downwards he moved with undeviating step towards this full appearance, allowing his motions to be seen more clearly at the successive stages of his progress, by the spirit of faith and of pious hope and trust, and of prophecy; and giving that spirit of faith and hope and prophecy, not only as a faculty of sight to discern his motion, but as a fruit of the motion itself, the dawn of the morning radiating from the rising Sun of Righteousness itself. It is all along the Spirit of grace and truth, to be testified in due time; not of the world, yet now vitally in it. Though rising amidst the natural laws of the earthly, it is not a development from them. So when it appeared in person, that person was under the law, and yet a power above it; born of the natural, yet himself spiritual seed of the woman, yet Son of God; descendant of the first Adam, yet before him in time, above him in rank, and his Maker; having given life already to the world, and now appearing that he may give it more abundantly. He testifies of the true life of man, as the brilliant, ruddy countenance of health testifies of the life within.

(3.) He indicates the relation of this world to his kingdom by the character and position of his servants. He designates a few at first to illustrate his truth and power by their character and their service. Here is a manifest and glowing point of vital connection. These men are penetrated and inwardly moulded by that Spirit which had formed the higher traits of his own person. They have been with him in the regeneration;

in the mighty reinforcement of the spiritual power in men, signalized by his coming in the flesh. They are raised to the summit of spiritual observation. With a small mental stature, and few natural gifts, they have a clear and settled discernment of the mystery of God in Christ; the mystery so long hidden from the wise and prudent, and now revealed unto babes. With their conception of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God, they sat on the twelve thrones of the world, and their judgment became the law of mankind.

His testimony thus took effect on them. It was not through flesh and blood that they had their knowledge, but by the Father in heaven. That mustard seed is planted for a new harvest of knowledge in the world. It has not yet a deep strong root among the human faculties. It has not yet the branches in which the fowls of heaven could lodge. But it is planted and must grow. This is a great step of progress never to be retraced. It was by a long course that that point was reached; and by a long course in the future must the new principle reach its place in human affairs.

Thus the kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world, is preparing to be known hereafter as the leading power in the progress of mankind. From its place at the foundation of all the departments of human life, it works upward and outward through them, to enforce them all with their true health and vigour. When sought as the first and chief good, it brings all other things along with it. Its vital circulation pervades all the interests of men. Seek first the kingdom of God. As a principle within the soul of man, the living imperishable substance of order and glory for the world, now to be known and honoured in its work; it is ever looking and moving, from amidst the sin, the sorrow, and the tumult of the human spirit towards an era of perfect purity and peace on earth.

This new but obscure appearance of the kingdom of Christ in the field of human history, does not seem like the rising of an institution now introduced, to share with other institutions in shaping the destiny of man. It seems rather like a primeval principle; and not even beginning with the beginning of the world, but existing before it, and holding upon the material forms of this temporal system by the ties of life. We find it

taking into its living circle the earthly bodies of the saints, uniting them by spiritual bonds to Christ, consecrating them as temples of the Holy Ghost, regenerating them by the present indwelling of the resurrection power, and making them instruments of righteousness, to be offered as a living sacrifice to God. We discern here a spiritual affinity, even for the material world. The spirit of man, in its living union and communion with the Spirit of God, and as an actual partaker of the Divine nature, lives itself into a material organization, and holds it as part of itself, a sharer in its present discipline and character, and joint heir to its future glory. So comprehensive is the relation of the kingdom of Christ to this world; so thoroughly does it pervade the constitution of the earthly system, planting and blending its heavenly energies amidst gross corporeal forms, subjecting itself to their laws of present change, till the time arrives to refine them out of the earthly, and present them in the image of the heavenly; to change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself. This kingdom, with all its appearance of an institution over men, is still essentially a principle within them, revealing its earthly relations in the doctrine, the character, and the service of the first disciples of Christ.

The subjects of this kingdom thus in this world, are to continue in it; a peculiar sort of self-perpetuating body, with powers and rights indwelling and inviolable. One generation goeth, and another cometh; a stream of being; yet such a stream that the new generation rises out of the old. The generations live one continuous life, which rises as from a fountain in the kingdom of Christ. We trace it in this earthly sphere, not as in space, but as the hidden substance of an organizing energy, hid with Christ in God, yet wearing, under earthly laws, and as to its local and temporal phenomena, the yoke of a rigid obedience. And yet, like the Prince of life himself in his subjection to those laws, it is greater than they, and binds them to its own service. However feeble in appearance in the first disciples of our Lord, yet with the living power of Christ for its support, how surely must it advance with the course of human generations.

In this light observe those humble disciples of Christ, demoralized, dispersed, and powerless as they are in their leader's extremity; and, are these the men to revolutionize the world, and take the kingdom? The church looks always at this wonder with awe and adoration. The man Jesus, a forsaken, despised and unresisting captive, with death before him, had presumed through life the universal prevalence of his doctrine; and now, when all seems over with him, still holds that calm presumption clear and firm as ever. "Fear not, little flock," he would still say, "it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Conscious as ever of the power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him; and having just consoled his disciples with the assurance that he had overcome the world, he surrenders himself to a shameful death, and his followers to discouragement and dispersion. Are these men, Leader and followers, the light of the world; the depository of invincible truth and power for all mankind. The world must always ask such questions concerning a kingdom whose power it has no rule to measure, and whose foundations it has no line to explore.

When these men were sifted as wheat, and all the perishable integuments of their life were blown away, there might be left but the smallest grain. And this again is the wonder and the glory. It was as a spark of life in embers. The living word in them shone forth even into their own consciousness, with only a flickering conviction; while on the eye of the world it did not then even glimmer. That new gift of the Holy Spirit, the root and ground in them of the new order of things, like a small seed in the soil, seems almost undistinguishable from the dust around it; but it goes down to the place of its future root in the inner man. There is the position from which it is to command the world. From thence it opens upward, like the tree with its commanding and fruitful branches, into congenial and convenient institutions in which the ordinances of Christ and the social sentiments of human nature harmonize and coöperate to promote its growth and fruitfulness. The Spirit takes up the flesh, and pervades it with its heavenly life. This mystery is now revealed; the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things

by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.

Those first followers of Christ, in their very depression and infirmity, were a great power in the world. The treachery, fickleness, and timidity revealed in their first trial, were signs, indeed, of their own weakness, but would illustrate the strength of Christ in their victory. As Christ in his death, so Peter, and all the timid and faltering eleven, conquered when they fell. While they yielded to temptation, there was a heart within that could feel the look of Christ, and put forth a recovering power. Even in the body of death there was a latent sensibility to the power of life through the spirit now given them. With their weakness there were now united the elements of strength. They receive and appropriate the supply of whatever they lacked in themselves. Had they been of this world, they could not have risen above their infirmity; for nothing can overcome the laws of its own nature; but the spirit now in them is the Spirit of their Lord, the power by which he rules. For it to live is to reign. "As I live, ye shall live." It looks steadfastly to the subduing of all things unto itself, as the rising sun towards the meridian. We see how it speaks and acts the sovereign, even in the deepest humiliation. It carries itself in the posture, not of hope which may fail, but of conscious power to realize in this world what is already fact in the other.

This security resides in the seat of its power. The position of the kingdom of Christ in relation to this world is that of actual and supreme control. It does not stand before men to assert its right and authority; but the real understanding of its right and power comes to men rather as an inward consciousness than as an outward fact of knowledge. Men are willing in the day of its power. They know the doctrine who do the will. The power of this kingdom does not begin by being known. It is known by its work. It corrects the tree in the root. It purifies the stream at the fountain. Its victories are not determined on the field of phenomenon, but in the secret chamber of principle and power. The empire of Cæsar, as a worldly fact, rests on the sand of visible change. Viewed as

one of the successive states of the field it occupies, it is one of the masses of the sand itself, and with the shifting sands it must shift with the rest. The power which upholds the whole is behind the scene. The scene of actual conflict between pope and emperor is not the point where the victorious power of Christ is first applied; nor do the questions there raised touch his power of control or the fact of his actual dominion. Such visible conflicts are but the motions of the earthly substance suspended in the great solution of the kingdom of Christ, in which the particles, by their own laws and the law of the spirit of life in which they move, are floating towards their places in the vast clear crystal of the finished world.

4. The mutual relation of this world and the kingdom of Christ is indicated by the progress of the world.

By the progressive movement of the world, we mean what everybody recognizes as the course of change which connects the beginning of the world with its end; a course of change proceeding by laws which bind the end to the beginning by a divine decree, and which determine, by indwelling power, the place and office of every member of the system, of every event in the course, and of every item in the result.

The kingdom is the Lord's. The various and ever-varying phases of the stream of earthly life, are visible delineations of his power and will. History grows. The course of worldly change is a growth; an unfolding of the properties and laws of things. The perpetual creations of the world are from the workings of a system which proceeds by its indwelling tendencies, and are like the growth of a living organism. All are the workmanship of God. He moves the heavenly bodies in their orbits, by properties residing in them, and with a uniformity and precision which could not be exceeded if they were instinct with an intelligent and perfect life. He paints the lily with the inimitable pencil of a vegetable law co-working with the laws of light. He prints, on the face of the world, a history of his working in the human race, by the laws of life in man combined with the law of his own Spirit. It is all an earthly painting by living forces, which in this way, and in no other, become known to us. The history of this world is the self-registering activity of the unseen powers of the kingdom of

Christ ; and time a transient portraiture of eternity ; mournfully confused and defaced indeed, but always nearer its time for appearing in full divine glory. Here the unsearchable and universal laws, the infinite, enact themselves in part for the temporary instruction and government of men. But how little of their glory can be set in our inch of space and our hand-breadth of time ! Enough is known, however, to illustrate the universal sway of the kingdom of Christ, even over the changes of visible things. It is only in a qualified or figurative sense that we can ever speak of anything as out of its bounds. It has no outside. The sin against it, whether of angels or of men, is not an invasion from without, but a rebellion within. Different as the apparent course of individuals may be, and awfully and eternally different as may be the results to individuals under his reign, that reign is still absolute, actual, and universal. And by close inspection we see it where we might not expect. In forms of human thought, in moral judgments, in the outward relations and practices of men, their methods of culture, their social organizations, their laws, their institutions, all the types and all the degrees of their civilization, you discern somewhat, in the character and experience of all, which bears the marks of his spiritual workmanship, though often but dimly discernible. The hand of Christ is everywhere manifest.

All real improvement in the condition and prospects of man arises from the kingdom of Christ, and begins of course in the heart. Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt. Men well know the great labour, and the small gain, of efforts towards reform where there is no internal work. Wherever mere suasion or discipline results in good—if in natural goodness—it is from principles which were in the man before, and which waited, like seed in the soil, to be wakened and brought forth to life ; if in spiritual righteousness, it is by quickening the seed of the word already in the heart. Culture developes nature, but never changes it. The life of Christ must first be implanted in the soul, and then the reward of faithful and prudent spiritual culture, however slow, is sure. The kingdom of spiritual life, like that of nature, has its appointed times. Men must watch for its coming. All who would profit by its progress must have

their eyes in the direction of its motion ; forgetting all behind, and pressing forward. Good men, at the opposite extremes of conservatism and progressiveness, may equally need admonition ; the one against presuming that the goal is reached ; the other, against rash haste to reach it.

The people of God have such things as these to remember : that they have a rebellious nature ; that they are under correction ; that they are grafted with the spirit of new obedience ; that this must grow by the laws of their nature, while it must rule by its own. The ancient Israel could hardly live except alternately at opposite extremes : either indolently longing to return and remain in Egypt, or, under the impulse of a sudden awakening, rushing up the hill against the Canaanite, to be driven back with shame and loss ; all to show that the law of the kingdom required the forty years training till Israel should be ripe for the conquest, and the iniquity of the Amorites should be full.

In the order of creation, that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural. As God first formed the body of Adam, and then breathed into it the breath of life which made the man a living soul, so he is constantly forming the natural for the spiritual through successive generations ; and we are witnessing the process of breathing into this natural body of collective man—the breath of the new and spiritual life. If any are pleased with the geological hints that the six days of the original creation were vast periods of creative activity in finishing the order and the beauty of the natural world, they may discern a like demiurgic period ever since going on in bringing forth the new creation. Long, oh how long, even according to our biblical reckoning of six thousand years, has the world been waiting on the gradual inbreathing of the Spirit of God into this body of sin, and the bringing forth of the fruits of that life in a redeemed and glorious church on earth. And yet, it is not slackness concerning his promise as some men count slackness. It is the progress of the Eternal One, with whom one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.

The power of the new creation works under the law of the old. The nature of man, as made at first, is the foundation of

the new superstructure—the web of the new fabric. The spiritual life is given to the natural man to be his. The whole new formation is a growth of the spiritual and the natural together under the laws of the natural. The spiritual life is given by virtue of the covenant; and with it are appointed means for bringing it forth in the forms of righteousness and peace. In this progressive work in individuals, and in generations of men, it is our part to conform in thought, in word, and in deed. Reason should form an orderly conception of it. The heart may delight in it as an incitement to grateful adoration. The whole man should work together with it in promoting purity and peace in the earth. But chiefly does the new creature conform to this advancing work with lively expectation and desire; looking for and hasting unto the coming perfection. This is the natural posture of the spiritual man in this world. As the child lives towards manhood, so he looks towards it; and his expectation looking is from the nature of his life. Man, whether as an individual or as a race, lives not for what he is, but for what he is to be. It doth not yet appear what he shall be; but his inmost desire is to be what he is not now. All the living motions of the soul are towards the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and the prayer that is foremost on the lips is: Thy kingdom come.

The whole earthly system has a vital sympathy with this expectation of regenerate man. The entire world has a predestined consummation, and that belongs with the complete salvation of man. All has come into being from the kingdom of Christ, and for it. The invisible, refined substance of the material creation can be joined with spirit, and partake of its perfection and its glory. The lower forms of the old creation have no consciousness, indeed, and cannot enjoy or adore; but they can minister, and this power of a subordinate ministry is but another name for a tendency towards the goal of human perfectibility. This idea the apostle Paul gives to the church. His great induction from the facts of redemption to the law of universal sympathy with the redeemed in the material world has this broad ground. The one Spirit of Christ, which applies the purchased redemption in the souls and bodies of the saints, is equally the natural power of the world, and fits his working

in the one to his working in the other, using natural material for spiritual blessings, and making all things work together for his spiritual purpose. This is the Apostle's view. The Omnipresent Spirit, who pervades all things, carries those same powers and tendencies with him throughout, makes them manifest where the conditions allow, and where the conditions do not allow their open manifestation warrants and encourages our faith in their existence. By this faith we understand that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, together with the new creature in Christ, waiting for and tending towards the manifestation of the sons of God. The Spirit in the whole creation is conscious of its own yearnings, though the senseless world is not. All things have not consciousness; all cannot enjoy or adore; but all can minister. This whole world has a predestined consummation, coinciding with the redemption of the church. And its tendencies or yearnings agree with its destiny. For all is full of that Omnipresent Spirit which is renewing man. As the ground was cursed in the sin of man, it shall be blessed in his redemption. It looks and waits for that blessing. And thus while the spirit in the children of God prays, *Thy kingdom come*, the same spirit in the whole creation silently responds, *Thy kingdom come*.

We can trace in the scriptures and in the history of the church, the perfect mutual concurrence of the natural and the spiritual. Nature and grace work together. Every subject of the kingdom of grace is an instance. Born into the natural world, he draws his first breath amidst redeeming powers which act upon him according to the covenant under which he lives. If a heathen, he begins his natural existence under those obscure and feeble spiritual influences which are attended by no law, as a schoolmaster, to lead the man to Christ, and no Gospel revelations to bring forth in the soul the clear light of life and immortality. He has only those silent and almost imperceptible motions of the spirit with which the world under the covenant of grace with Adam, was left, without oracles and ordinances, every man to walk in his own ways; motions which, except in a few illustrious cases, seem wholly lost amidst the universal and unrestrained corruption. If a Jew before the coming of Christ, he begins his existence in the midst of that pervading

spiritual influence which belongs to the covenant of grace with Abraham and his seed; and in connection with which the whole course of Providence is modified by peculiar revelations and ordinances. If born under the Christian covenant, he comes into the midst of that pervading spiritual influence which is peculiar to the dispensation of grace through Christ as the revealed Mediator of the better covenant, and which tends to produce faith in Jesus Christ, and the knowledge of him. And in all these cases the laws of nature and the laws of grace co-operate. Under the new covenant the divine method is given in full; and there we learn that the natural and the spiritual are to be subject to one and the same treatment, and to be brought up together. The training of the whole man is to be the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The earliest unfolding of the personal character must be under Christian teaching and practice; with the use of ordinances which signify and presuppose the spiritual state, and seal the blessing of the Lord upon it, in the increase of faith and love and peace; with gifts, interests, and obligations, which relate directly to the coming of the kingdom of Christ, the use of its nurture, the attainment of its righteousness, and the hope of its glory. The arms of covenant grace in Christ receive the individual whom nature brings into being. The Spirit of grace sanctifies the family which nature rears. The promise of spiritual blessing to the family becomes the sum of all blessings; the law of spiritual culture in the family the basis of all culture. The powers of nature and those of grace are expected to concur and blend with one another, under the gospel discipline, and the flesh and the spirit are alike to gain their chief end by seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

In this long formative period of the new creation, as it employs the meditative reason of the church, we see the kingdom of Christ rising gradually through the sin and darkness of the human spirit, and awakening aspirations everywhere which humanity itself does not understand till guided by the scriptures of divine inspiration. In covenant after covenant, the spirit of the kingdom appears in increasing glory, till in Jesus Christ, it stands with the genuine form and face of immortality. The spirit of these covenants is not stationary, but progressive. It

advances through all the covenants, from one to the other, as a series; and it advances also under each, according to the conditions. There is a religious development discernible along the ages of heathenism. Under the Jewish covenant we see an obvious contrast between the religious development of a Samson and that of a Gamaliel. And under the new and better covenant of Christ we have no difficulty in observing a progressive operation of the Spirit, producing the forms of individual character and the social and civil relations of successive ages, according to the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and the complicated and diverse conditions of the people.

The Bible, indeed, records the decree, the declaration of the divine will, that these things shall be so. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? But while we read the recorded decree, we see also a vast and orderly system of providential agencies, each one with this decree impressed, as a law of life, on the essence of its constitution. And at the invisible basis of the system lie those heavenly powers which constitute the original subjects of the kingdom of Christ. Thus what we read as ordained by will, we observe as necessitated by the nature of things. "God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence." The decree that water shall flow in rivers is executed, amongst other means by atmospheric laws, the gravity of water, and the configuration of the surface of the earth. Following the luminous and unfading lines of analogy into the unseen world, we perceive, by a rational exercise of faith in the holy scriptures, the exquisite, invisible filaments, the spiritual embodiments, and active representatives of the heavenly forces, which guide the falling sparrow and arrange the hairs of our head. For the aggregate experience of each of the "little ones" of Christ in this world, we have, in the other, an angel, a corresponding personal aggregate of heavenly powers, which always beholds the face of the Father in heaven. Thus the kingdom of Christ has a personal ministering spirit for each of its earthly subjects, maintaining the vital and inviolable communion, through a created medium, between every member of his body in the world, and the infinite depths of his eternal life. Every earthly phenomenon has its body of heavenly principles as the invisible residence of the laws which govern it. And this

innumerable multitude of principalities and powers, with all their high intelligence, and their pure and ardent love, constitute, under Christ, the prime ministry of his kingdom, next to his throne, to execute his pleasure in conducting the progress of the world. "Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire."

The divine Spirit breathes in the saints the petition, *Thy kingdom come*. He is the indwelling, almighty, omnipresent efficient in the kingdom of Christ. And the breathing of this prayer is a part of his progressive operation. It shows that, in relation to this world, his work is not stationary. It belongs with that universal motion in the world by which the old is continually giving place to the new. And it proves that, in this process as a whole, the worse is continually giving place to the better. In the eye of Christian faith all change is progress. Whether the new is always felt to be in itself the better or not, it may always be taken by faith as a step towards the better. Evil is not suddenly supplanted by the absolutely good. It is mixed with good for gradual transmutation or distinction. Fruits of sin become the cure of sin, and even acquire somewhat of a relative righteousness. How many motions of human nature which do not originate in the law of righteousness, become convergent towards it, join in living affinity with it, partake of its character, and illustrate its power. How many things are to be disapproved as evil in their source and their nature, yet treated as relatively good; evil, when compared with that perfect state of man which all should look for and strive to attain; good, as steps toward the better. Thus the moral sense of the church adapts itself to the transition state. The Spirit works this adaptation. We accept from Christ the moral maxims belonging to the perfection of mankind, but confess the necessity of failing to carry them out, except in such way and measure as Providence shall determine. And what Providence determines respecting our treatment even of real evils, we consider relatively good, because best for the time. We thus rightly condemn in theory what we rightly justify in fact. And here we must meet the highest and most difficult questions connected with this process of recovery from sin.

Happily for the Christian, he needs no philosophical theory

to maintain his sense of sin; so little does this depend on intellectual conditions, and so little can mere reasoning do to produce or to destroy it. He feels right concerning sin, while confessing, with sorrow, that it defiles all the heart and all the conduct of all men. That feeling, in itself, he could not improve by any theoretical view. Still we must have a rational adjustment of the subject. Sin, as to its nature and relations, is no less matter of thought than of feeling. In this world of acknowledged and mournful evil, where the people of God in all their generations must unite in the prayer, *Thy kingdom come*, what shall we say and do while the kingdom is coming? How shall we think and act respecting things confessedly against the perfect law of righteousness, yet in the providence of God unavoidable? We believe that the kingdom of Christ has all the evil of the world under treatment, and that the greater our trouble, the stronger the proof that the evil is deeply rooted, and that the remedies are taking effect. We know that the perfect law requires perfect love; and that all human relations and works which do not arise from perfect love to God and man, are unrighteous, and must cease. But what shall we do while men do not love? This is the plainly spoken form of our great economic problem for church and state. Which is the best way of living in sin? Since perfect obedience is not to be presumed, how may we suffer least without it? What is our true theoretical relation to things known and acknowledged to be contrary to the perfect law of righteousness? Where is our line of *relative* rectitude in things not absolutely right? That there is a rational position for the church in this matter we cannot doubt;—a position which involves no evasion, employs no sophistry, and rests on no questionable presumption.

On such points as the following all enlightened Christians are clear and decided:—

1. The perfect standard of righteousness presented in the precepts and example of Christ is intended for important practical effect in the church at all times, but to be fully realized only in the perfect moral state of the world. This perfect moral standard, as a part of the appointed and common means of religious discipline, is peculiar to the Gospel. Our Lord claimed openly to raise the standard of righteousness above

that of the ancient covenant as apprehended and applied by the people. The church has now before her, as the prize of her high calling, the law of absolute perfection. By this her members must measure their shortcomings, and cultivate that repentance which needeth not to be repented of. They must never count themselves to have apprehended, but press always towards the mark; and all the great and unavoidable infirmity which, by the perfect law, they detect in themselves and others, together with all its fruits in the relations and works of man, they must, with all the heart, habitually and utterly condemn and deplore.

2. Governments, institutions, and usages, which owe their origin to moral imperfection, and which cannot be at once reformed, are to be so used as to favour reformation, and thus to aid the progress of the kingdom of Christ. Such use of recognized and lamented evils, while it does not change their inherent character as the offspring of sin, discharges the obligation of the law of righteousness for the time. We are acquitted of responsibility and are approved for wisdom, when we discern and condemn the evil, and use it for good; when we judge the particular and local wrong by its connection with the general disorder of the world, and treat it with remedies adapted to the all-pervading malady. And it is in general found to be the law of our progress, that such a treatment of evil, and we mean by evil whatever is contrary to the perfect law of righteousness, uses up the evil itself, turning the whole to good account for correction, removing it in the right time and in the right way, for the highest good of all concerned who are seeking the kingdom of God.

To illustrate the right and profitable use of things which proceed from the unrighteousness of men: The oath cometh of evil. Because all men are liars, the oath, with its awakening appeal to the sense of God, its suggestion of the sacredness of truth, and its legal penalty for perjury, becomes a needful security against falsehood and infidelity to the public good. The Saviour declares his prohibition, "Swear not at all," to remind his people of the evil occasion for the oath, and of the perfect law of truth which is to prevail; while yet by his providence, he points all people to the oath, or an equivalent affirmation, as

convenient for the present necessity. False witnesses must be constrained by solemn appeals to conscience, and put in fear of legal pains, till men rise above the need of the oath, and are ruled by the love of truth. The oath cometh only of evil, but is a means of good.

And whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts which war in your members? They are not to exist in the coming perfection of the world. The foremost feature of the age of righteousness is to be the beating of the swords into ploughshares, and the spears into pruning-hooks, and the nations learning war no more. And yet how largely is the history of the world's advancement the history of war. How prominent, universal, and constant, has been the agency of war in the divine administration of human affairs. How few have been the steps taken by Providence, in the social progress of mankind, without the hostile mutual encounter of nations. What other measure has been so common or so effectual for punishing and correcting human sin, and forwarding the race in its appointed course of improvement. The Prince of peace himself recognized its destined instrumentality in the new form of his redeeming work. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I am not come to send peace, but a sword." The fact is, that the vindication of war is always found in the providential alternative of war or something worse. And yet, even with men whose thoughts have all been formed in familiarity with the deeply-rooted and unavoidable necessities of the sinful world, it has never stood below the chief of evils, or been less denounced than the most malignant and horrible of the progeny of sin. As a sign of its decline, we hear its necessity more and more denied, and witness the increase of conscientious and hopeful endeavours to abolish it. Alas, that nations under the clearest gospel light have not yet learned to live without it. But still undoubtedly the world is outgrowing war. The sword has had its day. The hand that now draws it hesitates at the rebuke of the heart, and must offer its apology to the moral sense of mankind. The course of change in this respect, however tardy, is ceaseless and irresistible. It does not depend on specific measures arising from the impulse of narrow views, or any extreme or unseasonable scruples of a

sect, or any association to uphold an abstraction relating to peace, and to make the evils of war an isolated specialty. It proceeds by the general, all-pervading motion of the kingdom of Christ. It is from that law of progress in the world which brings all things in their time. It is from the same Spirit of God which formerly directed war while denouncing it and promising the reign of peace. Here is one of the inevitable contradictions of the progressive conflict between righteousness and sin. We justify war as called for by evil, and condemn it because it cometh of evil. Every war of the world has been against war. The warrior himself has learned to say, We fight for peace. Thus in the same words we justify war and condemn it. We meet unavoidable evil, and use it for good; co-working with Providence to make the sin of men commend the righteousness of God; while at the same time we acknowledge the sin as the sin of our nature of which we all are partakers, and plead the guilt with penitence and humiliation before God. Meanwhile, they who take the sword must perish by the sword. They must abide the terrible arbitrament. How long, O Lord, how long, must the sword continue to devour!

In relation to all the fruits of human iniquity which, by the laws of Providence are visited upon us, here is the patience and consolation of the saints: They are all for our profit, that we may learn the ways of Him who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working, and that we may be partakers of his holiness. Let the oath be for us a discipline for veracity, war a discipline for peace, bondage a discipline for freedom; every evil of our earthly condition a discipline for the opposite good. For the kingdom of Christ is coming, in which truth, peace, and freedom—every virtue and every blessing, shall be universal. Bear ye, therefore, one another's burdens and infirmities in peace and love and hope.

3. All enlightened Christians also clearly and decidedly agree, that amidst the necessary evils of this transition state of the world, the church must be guided by the united suggestions of the Spirit of Christ within her, and of the course of Providence. We have no positive divine statutes to mark our course. The Hebrews had this help. Institutions and usages which rose from sin, and which violated fundamental laws of human

life, were regulated among them by divine precepts. It is not so with us. In the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, we are to deal with the sins of the world according to the teachings of Providence and the spirit of wisdom which we have from Christ. The motions of this spirit, though they do not originate in the course of nature, still run upon the track of Providence. And with the Spirit of Christ in us, and the ordinances of the Gospel to quicken and sustain its operation, we are set forth on the highway of providence to conduct our difficult and delicate affairs towards the goal of the expected perfection. Wherein we succeed we have great gain. We realize a relative good from what is not good in itself. We overcome evil by a proper use. Wherein we fail, we take the consequences of our failure, however painful; only with the hope that we may learn from our sorrows, what we failed to learn without them. And thus in our failure we are under discipline for good.

4. We agree furthermore that it is always in season for brethren to reprove one another for every shortcoming, in fervent, brotherly, and universal love; for all evil affections and the words and deeds which proceed from them. The followers of Christ, with his standard of perfect righteousness before them, must try themselves always by that test, applying the refiner's fire to all their principles, all their relations, and all their works. They must condemn, as coming of evil, all things which they cannot conceive to coexist with perfect love and the perfect culture of all mankind. Against all things which proceed from and are fostered by the natural imperfections of humanity, Christians must ever be ready to give and to suffer the word of exhortation. All these imperfections are to recede before the progress of universal light and love; and the conception of that perfect state of the world which the precepts and the Spirit of Christ will form, should occupy the mind and keep alive the hope of the whole Christian brotherhood. Every fruit of human infirmity, of whatever form, should draw their unanimous attention to its sinful source, and move them to united humiliation and trustful fidelity in following the divine method of redemption. Their subdued and penitent fellowship in infirmity will enliven their fellowship of love and hope. It will reconcile them to one another, and all things to them.

Every form of evil will be a relative good. Their own unity of the Spirit will harmonize the world in their interest, and the river of their peace will multiply and distribute the riches of grace through all this vale of tears. Whatever is peculiar in the evils to be overcome by the church in this country, presents a peculiar call to our Christian people for mutual forbearance, faithful exhortation, and the wisest and most diligent and unanimous endeavour to make the working out of our salvation most effectual for the salvation of the world.

5. All intelligent Christians well know the danger of attaching too great importance to abstract and theoretical disputes. The zeal of controversy sometimes blinds the parties to the real interests at stake, and forces to opposite and irreconcilable extremes those who would otherwise perfectly agree as to the things they ought to do. How much of our present distraction has arisen from the persistent indulgence of abstract and unprofitable disputation, we should do well to consider. How much has the useless, angry, exasperating warfare of words hindered useful action! Practical difficulties are greatly reduced by a simple and earnest submission to the course of Providence, under the guidance of which, with the concurrent teaching of the scriptures, Christians are to *consider one another*, to provoke to love and to good works. The infirmity of speculation has nowhere else been so disastrous to human welfare as in a blind and presumptuous obtrusion against the manifest will of Providence; binding society by theories deduced from narrow and arbitrary observation of the facts and laws of the world. Adventurous and self-confident speculation is permitted to go quite too far in disturbing the practical harmony of Christians. The church, with all her diversities of thought, is one in seeking the coming of the kingdom of Christ. She is one in the assured faith that it is coming. Her members believe, with one heart, that, with the resistless and steady approach of that kingdom, the world is working out its salvation. They wait and labour to present the world to Christ, as his inheritance, by reconciling it with their aim and their progress towards the perfect righteousness. They find themselves encompassed with infirmity, each with his own and with that of others, and interwoven with evil as by the fibres of one living system. The

evils which break out upon the surface displease the moral taste as fruit of sin, and reveal the nature of their source. All feel that they are one in condemning, for this evil, and in being condemned. But all understand alike that the world, as a whole, and as a part of the kingdom of Christ, is changing for the better, and is preparing to become a pure mirror of his glory. And while all sincerely wish to do the most for the coming of the kingdom, perhaps they would help amelioration more by doing a little with love and peace, than much with hatred and strife. Sure as the church advances in the divine art of peace, while all her members will more and more agree as to what they ought to do, all will more and more content themselves with doing what they can agree to do. Perhaps even error in this latter direction would just now be the safer error for our church and our country.

The kingdom of Christ hath dominion over sin;—the sin of all the world. The church on earth, as the leading part of the earthly manifestation of the kingdom of Christ, hath dominion over sin;—the remaining sin of her living members. The child of God, truly begotten to the living hope of heaven, hath dominion over sin;—the sin of his heart, and its fruit in word and deed. The universal system of created reigning powers which constitute the essential principles of the kingdom of Christ, are victorious by their nature over evil, as light over darkness. We are witnessing the gradual progress of this power in the world. If sin reigned in the world, it would reign to universal and eternal death. But we see grace, from its very introduction, reigning through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. The kingdom of Christ has held a victorious power in the world from the beginning, and though not seen as yet in the actual reduction of all things into entire conformity to its laws, yet is it always recognized as conquering and to conquer all things in its time. Throughout this sublime and ever accelerating process, the reign of the gracious power is real, and reveals itself in the modification of the outworking sin, and in turning it to the account of righteousness. The sin of the world, which appears in ever-varying forms through successive generations, feels always this victorious power, and shows some mark of it upon itself—some pre-

monition of the coming defeat. The forms of evil are ever changing, as truth and right are more recognized among them. And in their time they disappear. The disciples of Christ can comfort and encourage one another with this truth. But woe to those who shut their eyes and hearts against the rising power of this kingdom, who disregard the work of God, and forfeit the higher benefits of its progress. Woe, woe, to those whose principles, interests, and powers, whose whole heart and life, are so interwoven with the sin of the world that the destruction of the sin must involve the destruction of themselves.

Let the servants of God survey this adorable movement. Its progress along the ages seems slow as men count progress; and to us who look only on the outward appearance, it seems, in some periods, even doubtful; but viewed from the beginning hitherto, how manifest and glorious; crowding the whole period of recorded time with its significant and fruitful events! Is it not a progress? The Spirit of Christ in his kingdom is ever pressing towards the mark. Even in the greatest obliquity and delinquency of the church, we see this steady uplooking. Strange, indeed, at times appears her departure from the true course of her advancement, as the stream of her life winds along the providential slopes of the world; but though with leagues of motion she make but a furlong of progress, she still makes real progress, and is never found again where she was.

Our required conformity to the ways of God in the progress of the kingdom of Christ will appear in this: That our eye be ever on the perfect standard of righteousness presented in the precepts and example of Christ; that we always press towards that standard; and that we make the best possible use of the providential arrangements of the world, in promoting our own progress and that of our fellow-men. In this honest and earnest endeavour the followers of Christ cannot seriously disagree. By their unity of the Spirit they may understand the providence of God essentially alike. Whereunto they have already attained they will walk by the same rule, they will mind the same thing; and in whatever they may differ, the Lord will reveal to them the way of duty. He will teach them how that which really cometh of evil may have its temporary place and use in the progress of his kingdom; and how the church, as her

light and power increase, becomes wiser and more successful in applying the evils of the world to her advantage. Her Redeemer liveth. Her redeeming power is a living power. It dwells in the depths of the Infinite and the Eternal, comes forth in the spirit of regenerate man, to whom the dominion of the world is given by the original decree; like the Son of God in the flesh, it lives itself into the natural system of the world through man as its head; becomes the alterative of its constitution, the regulating, guiding spirit of its progress, the essence of its righteousness and truth, its life, its hope, and its salvation.

5. This kingdom of living power, the kingdom of powers which are not seen and eternal, in its vital union with the things that are seen and temporal, secures the final consummation of the world. There is no real wisdom, nor counsel, nor power, against it. Its conquest of the world is not uncertain, because it is future. Its decisive movements are fully revealed to faith, and many of them have long been open to sight. Its heavenly heraldry is on the wing with the everlasting gospel for all people. The voice which whispered in the private ear on the isle of Patmos, has become the sound of the trumpet on every mountain; "Behold, I create all things new." The new Jerusalem is coming gradually forth from God out of heaven, about to present, as it were, to the eyes of men, the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven. The King will be manifest. He will appear to the ordinary mental vision of men. It will not require an ecstasy of faith, like that of the dying Stephen, or a rapture, like that of Paul, to enable men to see him. The saints will no longer need to be transported, or raised out of the sphere of sensible things, and as it were out of the body, to perceive the Lord in his real power and glory. He will come in the clouds of heaven. All the forms of earthly phenomena will be manifestations of him. He will appear without sin unto salvation. His revelations of himself, even under the conditions of time and space, will be no more distorted and perverted by the carnal apprehensions and ungodly tendencies of the natural man. The spiritual sense of the church will be clear, lively, and predominant, and will discern the personal presence and

glory of Christ, as shadowed forth to the ordinary intuition of faith in the regular course of visible changes in the world. So reason discerns the invisible presence of vegetable life through the verdure and the flowers of spring. The exaltation of Christ, an unchangeable and eternal reality of that invisible kingdom which is coming in this world, is thus to be realized in the distinct and joyful apprehension of the church, and to be represented in the things that are seen as the perfect and acknowledged glory of the earth.

The progress and consummation of the work of redemption by Christ, as accomplished in the coming of his kingdom, are conducted, and to be finished by the Spirit of peace. Whatever of strife and violence arises in the process, is due to the law of carnal mind, and not to the law of the Spirit. The carnal mind is enmity against God; and where it is allowed a prominent share in the principles of human action, it is only turbulent and contentious. When duly subjected to the law of Christ, though it may give plain and humiliating proof of its existence and its hatefulness, it gradually surrenders to the subduing and assimilating power of the kingdom, and allows itself to be gradually created anew in the image of God. But where it causes discord and strife, it is allowed a predominance which is not a legitimate condition of the work of redemption. The law of redemption requires, not indeed that the principle of evil in the heart of man shall be at the first annihilated, but that it shall not reign; that from the first it shall be under the reigning power of grace and peace. On this condition, the warfare between the flesh and the Spirit will not break out into social violence, but will be confined to the individual bosom; and even there, by watchful and faithful self-discipline, the way of life, under grace, is emphatically the way of peace for man. And the life of the Spirit, according to the laws of the kingdom of Christ, though not without trials, is still the only life of true peace. The promise of the highest prosperity is to those who seek first the kingdom of God; and this law of peace and prosperity is expressly enjoined on all the followers of Christ as the condition of their highest happiness, and most sure and rapid progress towards perfection.

For ourselves, we have evidently not attained to the Lord's

righteous and peaceful way of judging and correcting the evils with which we have to deal, and through which he is dealing with us in this merciful process of correction. The work of this world's renovation, by the coming of the kingdom of Christ, is the putting off the old man and the putting on of the new, in the individual, in the church, and in the state; and through the whole, there is a way of sure and uniform prosperity. Amidst all the undeniable and grievous evils of our fallen state, there is a course for us in which the way of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever. The processes of natural life go on by perpetual decay and renewal, and in these, unless the healthful law of life is violated, no blood is ever drawn by the shedding of the old and the putting on of the new. And so in this highest form of life on earth, the life of Christ in his people, whose whole earthly course is a putting off and a putting on by growth, is there not a healthful law—the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus—which makes us free from the law of sin and death? The individual believer has it as the art of his holy living, so to subject his whole being to the power of his faith and the law of the Spirit of life, that being justified, that is, delivered from the reigning and condemning power of sin, he may have lively and abiding peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. The church, as a body, has it as a beneficent part of her earthly discipline, so to deal with all the evils by which she is beset, as to maintain a victorious power over them, and not to give them the victory over herself. This is a discipline worthy of her calling; eminently worthy of the Spirit of Christ which is in her. O for that wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. This inestimable gift of Christ, the Wisdom of God, is freely offered. It is surely to be given. If we do not receive it, there shall be those on earth who will. The kingdom of Wisdom is coming; and that adorable, divine perfection which governs and adorns the kingdom, and is the most glorious secret of its power, will become the preëminent endowment of the church, and be known on earth and in heaven as the manifold wisdom of God. Even so come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.