

The World to Come

In Relation to

The Father's House

And Kingdom.

JAMES BOYD.

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THE FATHER'S HOUSE AND KINGDOM.

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STOW HILL BIBLE DEPÔT, AND PUBLISHING OFFICE,
NEWPORT (MON.)

PRICE TWOPENCE. THREE COPIES FOR SIXPENCE, POST FREE.

THE WORLD TO COME, IN RELATION TO THE FATHER'S HOUSE AND KINGDOM.

IN the present day, in which on the one hand a spirit of infidelity—I might say of antichrist, for it is that—is rampant, and on the other that which pretends to orthodoxy is turning the vital truth of God into a mere lifeless creed, how good it is to be able to fall back upon the holy Scriptures, as upon a tower of strength, well knowing that God will stand by all that He has said, and that no question that can arise has been unforeseen by Him, but that He has anticipated every evil way that the mind of the flesh, as under the influence of the evil one, may take, and has made provision in the Scriptures for its detection, exposure, and defeat. He will vindicate every utterance that He has caused to be put on record, for He has magnified His word above all His name. The Scriptures are a rock unshakeable, and however wildly the winds may blow, and whatever threatening voices may mingle with the fury of the tempest, we are always able to say confidently, “For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven.”

In these days, thank God, Bibles are plentiful, the poorest have direct access to the utterances of the Holy Spirit, the gospel is proclaimed with a measure of clearness, and people are informed that God would have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, and that He is no respecter of persons. If men will not have the gospel it is their own fault ; if they are without the Spirit, the blame lies at their own door. To be able to use the Scriptures aright a man must have faith in Christ, and be anointed by the Holy Spirit. But every one who has come to Christ has received the anointing. The only important thing for such to look to is that they may be under the influence of that anointing, and if they are, they will be intelligent in the mind of God, and they will not be found giving a loose rein to the fleshly mind, and wandering in paths not defined for us in the Scriptures. Such will have an outline of sound words, and the *spirit* of Scripture will be the joy and rejoicing of their hearts, and they will not be found transgressing the *letter*.

I say these few words before entering upon the subject I have before me, to remind both myself and the reader that there are limits within which our thoughts must travel in speaking of divine things, and that those limits are clearly defined in Scripture. I am not writing to set forth the peculiar views of a section of professing Christians,

but I have before me the whole assembly of God, and indeed the whole profession of Christ upon earth. Some who read will possibly find truth set forth with which they have been long familiar, others may find that I have cut at the roots of long- and deeply-cherished theories which have been woven into the very texture of their moral being; and on this account I feel, as I ever do in setting before the people of God the truth as I see it, a kind of natural timidity that has always to be overcome before I can proceed. No one ought to wish to unsettle the minds of saints, unless they are seen to be grounded upon what is really profitless to their spiritual welfare; and it is only by bringing in the truth that souls are to be helped, not by attacking error.

I wish to put before the reader, as clearly and as concisely as I can, the Lord helping me, what the prospect of the believer is as I see it. Various theories are afloat concerning this important subject, and firmly imbedded in the minds of true believers. The death of the body, and the passage of the spirit to be with Christ, is the prominent thought in most minds, and though it be true that to be "*Absent from the body*" is to be "*Present with the Lord*," I trust every one who may read this paper will see that this is not our *hope*; it is not set before us as something for which we are to look. A general resurrection is added to the above to

complete and perfect this doctrine, in which, by the power of God, all the human race shall come out of their graves at the close of the history of this earth, and stand before the great white throne to be judged according to their works, the righteous being then justified and the wicked condemned. The eternal state will then be begun. This theory is, I am happy to say, through the diffusion of Scripture knowledge, being rapidly driven to the winds. But I will hasten to set before the reader the way in which, as it appears to me, the hope is presented.

It is plain enough that the effect which the gospel, as preached by the apostles, had upon those who believed it was that they “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven” (1 Thess. i. 9, 10). Where the gospel is faithfully and clearly presented this must always be the effect, for the grace which carries with it salvation for all men teaches us “That, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; *looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*” (Titus ii. 12, 13). And Peter desires for those to whom he writes that the trial of their faith “Might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the *appearing* of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter i. 7); and he exhorts them to “Be sober,

and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the *revelation* of Jesus Christ ” (v. 13). The Corinthians were “ Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ ” (1 Cor. i. 7). The Colossians were told that “ When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory ” (Col. iii. 4). Timothy was enjoined to keep the commandment “ Without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ ” (1 Tim. vi. 14). The Hebrews are exhorted to patience, and encouraged by the announcement that “ Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry ” (Heb. x. 37); and “ Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation ” (chap. ix. 28). I need not multiply passages of Scripture, the object of this paper being only to encourage the reader to search for himself in the fear of God, and looking to Him for light.

But I can very well understand some one saying that when Christ comes it will be the last day, the end of the world, the complete wind-up of everything as far as earth is concerned. But Scripture presents things in a very different light. The last day does not mean the last day of time, upon which the sun shall set to rise no more, but the last day of the present age; and the end of the world does not mean the destruction of the heavens and the earth by fire, but the end of this present

age, which began at the giving of the law from Sinai, when the voice of the Lawgiver shook the earth, and which will be concluded when He, who then shook the earth, will shake heaven and earth, when He comes in the thunder of His power. The appearing of Christ will bring the present age to an end, and will also introduce an age which all who had faith looked forward to since the world began. The Old Testament is full of that age, and the reign of Christ, as also is the New. "Abraham rejoiced to see my day," Christ says, "and he saw it, and was glad" (Jno. viii. 56). Peter speaks of it as the times of the restoring of all things, of which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since time began (Acts iii. 21). Paul speaks of it as the dispensation of the fulness of times, when all things in the heavens and upon the earth shall be gathered under the headship of Christ (Eph. i. 10). Everything that has been foreshadowed in the past ages will be found realised in Christ. In the past ages God was casting shadows beforehand of what would be accomplished in Christ. This is why nothing that He ever set up in the man after the flesh stood for any length of time. No man was able to bear for a moment one of the least of Christ's glories. Dominion over this creation was given to Adam, but he fell the moment he was tested. Noah was to execute judgment in the earth and the govern-

ment of it was committed to him, but the next thing you hear of him is his drunkenness and degradation. Abraham gets the promises, but they are confirmed to his seed, and that seed is not Isaac but Christ. Moses the apostle, and Aaron the priest, and the tabernacle, and the ark of testimony, and all the sacrifices—what did all these things do for the people? Moses gave Israel a law that brought upon them condemnation and the curse, and he was unable to make atonement for them, or lead them into the land. Aaron, God's high priest, made for the people a calf of gold, and became high priest to that idol. David was anointed with the holy oil, and placed upon the throne, but he soon stained it with innocent blood. Solomon built the temple, but no sooner are its glories described than we read of its desecration. The throne of David became utterly polluted, and all the power passed into the hands of the gentile king Nebuchadnezzar; but the idolatrous monarch usurped the place of God, made an image of gold to be worshipped, and a lake of fire for all who refused to bow down to it. Every one of these men failed God. Not one could support a single glory placed upon him by God. But these were all shadows of what Christ shall take up in the next age—the dispensation of the fulness of all these times. In the coming age you will find Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, Moses,

Aaron, the tabernacle, and all connected with it, Joshua, David, Solomon, Nebuchadnezzar, and many other *shadows* which I have not mentioned. Where are all these to be found ? They will all be found in Christ. Everything that was shadowed forth in these past ages will have their fulfilment in the next age in Christ. He will take up everything that each of these men failed in, and maintain all to the glory and praise of God. Hence the appearing of Christ has been the great hope of the saints of God in all ages ; and the cloud of witnesses in Hebrews xi. were led by the light of that day to abandon every earthly prospect ; and all the works of power wrought by them, through faith, were only samples of the powers of the world to come, by which everything will be subdued under the feet of man in the Person of Christ. The writer of the Hebrew epistle tells those to whom he writes not to cast away their confidence, which hath great recompense of reward ; “ For ” he says, “ ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.” And then he points them to the fulfilment of the promise, “ For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith ” (Heb. x.) ; and then in chap. xi. we have the cloud of witnesses, who lived by faith in the light of the coming of Christ and of the world which would be placed under Him.

“These all,” he says, “having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise ; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect ” (vv. 39, 40). At the appearing we shall be made perfect, we shall have the redemption of the body (Rom. viii. 23).; it shall be fashioned like Christ’s body of glory (Phil. iii. 21) ; we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as he is (1 Jno. iii. 2) ; we shall be with Christ in the Father’s house (Jno. xiv. 3) ; sit upon the throne of the Son with Him (Rev. iii. 21) ; reign with Him (2 Tim. ii. 12) ; and judge the world and angels (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3).

I can understand some one now asking me where I bring in the taking up of the church, or, as it is commonly called, “*The rapture.*” I answer, it is caught up at the coming of Christ. And now I desire to say a word as to the rapture, as it is called. The only place in Scripture we have it mentioned, as far as I am aware, is in 1 Thess. iv. There it is brought in to explain a great difficulty, and that difficulty lay in the inability of the believers at Thessalonica to understand how those who had died, or fallen asleep as it is called, could share in the blessings of Christ’s personal presence at His coming. This the apostle explains by telling them something that up to that time they had not been made acquainted with.

It is as clear as can be that the apostles left their converts looking for the appearing of Christ. This I have tried earlier in this paper to show from the Scriptures; and it is not God's way to place souls in a certain attitude with a bright hope before their hearts, and afterwards to root them up out of that in which, by the gospel, they had been established, and give them something else as their expectation. Whatever we begin with we continue in, if God has given it to us; and whatever further light we may be blessed with, it only establishes our hearts more firmly in that which was given to us at the outset.

Christ is said in Scripture to come twice: "Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself"; and "to them that look for him shall he appear the *second time* without sin unto salvation" (Heb. ix.) One coming has already taken place; we look for His second coming. The way the rapture is viewed in the minds of some gives the idea of three comings—one to put away sin, another for His church, and a third at His appearing to the world. The first movement He makes is in order to subdue all things to Himself. He comes from heaven to do this. Heaven is the point of departure. He is said to descend from heaven: the earth is the objective, He moves in that direction, clothed with power for the subjugation of all things

to Himself. The first thing that is touched by that almighty power is the bodies of the saints. From heaven "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, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Phil. iii. 20, 21). "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17). His mighty power shall raise His sleeping saints in glory, change the living ones, and both together shall be caught up to meet Him in the air. In this way the power by which He will subdue all things to Himself is for the first time put in operation, as far as man upon earth is concerned. His object in leaving heaven is to put down all rule and all authority and power, and put every enemy under His feet. His descent into the air is the first stage of the journey, and a most important and blessed one for us, for we meet Him there. It brings Him into the region of earth. It is not that He has left heaven behind Him, as having for the time no more to do with it. I do not think He ever absolutely leaves it. He brings the power and

blessing and atmosphere of heaven along with Him, so that I should say that when He comes into the air He is still in heaven. It is much more that He extends the sphere of heaven. But His coming into the air does not manifest Him to the world. Certain events must take place before the moment comes when heaven will be opened, and when every eye will see Him, and the light of His glory will illuminate the world. Satan has to be dislodged by angelic means from his seat in the heavens. Michael and his angels will fight with, and expel from the heavens, the devil and his angels, who will come down to earth with great wrath, to work destruction for the little time that remains to him before he is cast into the bottomless pit. I suppose that all that is recorded from Rev. iv. 1, to xix. 9, takes place while we are with Christ in the air, before He discloses Himself to the world.

My object in bringing this before the reader is to disabuse his mind of the idea that the Lord comes and takes His church to Himself, and returns again to the point of His departure, and after a time comes back again with His saints to reign over the earth. This, as I have already said, would make three comings, whereas there are only the *first* and *second* in Scripture.

While the church is upon earth the Holy Spirit is here, for it is His habitation, and because of this

a great influence is exercised upon this world. Evil does not get the same loose rein as it will do when God has no longer a dwelling-place upon earth. The presence of a divine person upon earth must have a powerful influence in the restraining of evil. But when the church is caught up to meet Christ in the air, and the devil is cast down to the earth, the progress of evil must be terrific. The iniquity of the world will very quickly overflow all its banks, and the intervention of Christ in judgment must then no longer be delayed. The heavens will be rent, and "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with the angels of his might, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day" (2 Thess. 1). He will reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. At the close of His reign He will judge the dead. The present heavens and earth, which have been the witnesses of the rebellion of man, the power of the devil, the humiliation and the triumph of Christ, and the triumph of God through Christ, will, now that they have served their purpose, perish; and Jesus who made them will as a vesture fold them

up, and a new heaven and a new earth will be brought in, secure from the invasion of evil. This, and all this, is our hope, our one hope, not to be broken up into parts, with one part set in antagonism to the other, but one complete whole, centering in the Man Christ Jesus, who is glorified at the right hand of God. Hence we look for His appearing, that all may be accomplished.

The pledge and guarantee of this is that Jesus is at the right hand of God. His last word to His church is, "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." The scribes knew Him only as David's son, but He is also David's root. He is the One from whom all that had any real value in David had its origin. As David's son the Gentile had no title to Him, but as David's Lord He is Lord of all and over all, and rich unto all that call upon Him ; He is the hope of Jew and Gentile alike. As the Bright and Morning Star He is the harbinger of the day. The Old Testament saints had the word of prophecy regarding the coming day ; but in the Morning Star, at the right hand of power, we have the One who will bring in the day. The Morning Star has risen, and thus the day is made sure to us.

From the outset of the fall of man the world to come was always in view, and faith was begotten in hearts by the light of that day. The devil was not always to have his own way, neither was poor

degraded man to be his slave for ever. Even in Eden the one who was to bruise the serpent's head was announced, and from that day faith looked forward to the Deliverer. Now the Deliverer has appeared, and has invaded the stronghold of Satan, and the foe is crushed. The clearing of the heavens and the earth from the presence of sin, Satan, death, and the hosts of evil is only a mere matter of detail ; the great work has been done by which the forces of the enemy have been paralysed ; the rest is simple.

The testimony to the glory of Christ and the grace of God to man in giving Him glory, is the subject of the gospel, and the righteousness which is of faith says, " If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved " (Rom. x. 9). Those who confess Jesus as Lord, come into the kingdom before it is in display, that is, before Christ appears the second time to assume the reins of the government of the world. We become in this way subjects of the kingdom of heaven. It is the kingdom of heaven because the seat of authority is established there. The kingdom of God, which is that which is now preached in the gospel, is another aspect of the same thing, and refers to the moral sway of God, producing, in those that come under that sway, righteousness, peace, and joy, in the power of the

Holy Ghost. Therefore even when Christ was upon earth, though the kingdom of heaven was *at hand* (Matt. iv. 17), the kingdom of God had *already come* (Luke xi. 20), though to see the latter one must be born again (Jno. iii. 3); but we could not have the former until the King was in heaven. The kingdom of the Son of man is another aspect of the same kingdom, but conveys the great truth to the mind that everything is to be subjected to man. The kingdom of His dear Son (Col. i. 13) gives the thought of the Son upon the throne of the Father during the day of His rejection by man. I do not think the kingdom of the Father has any present existence, but I think it is in preparation, and the way in which it will be brought about I will try to make plain.

The throne Christ at present occupies is the Father's, and we are "Giving thanks to the Father, who 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" (Col. i. 12, 13). He is the One who is to accomplish the whole will of God, give effect to every counsel of the Father's heart, and bring in a universe in which God will find satisfaction. To this end He took the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. Coming into the world, He says, "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is

written of me) to do thy will, O God ” (Heb. x. 7). In the blood of His cross He laid the foundation of this vast moral universe. I say *moral* universe in contrast to the physical ; it is a universe which will be illuminated by the revelation of God in Christ, and in which every heart will beat responsive to His unfathomable love.

We are the first-fruits of this marvellous creation. The Father has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son. We are the subjects—the willing subjects—of this kingdom. In this kingdom we have found salvation ; but more than this, we have been brought under the influence of His love. In this way a subduing process is carried on in our souls, and growth by the true knowledge of God. In the end our bodies will be brought under His subduing power, and will be fashioned like to His body of glory. We are to be like Him. This is the Father’s thought for us, and the Son will give effect to it. He will, as we have been seeing, raise His sleeping saints in glory, and change us who are alive, and place us before the face of God in the Father’s house according to His promise, that where He is we may be also. He is Son in the Father’s house, and we are to be sons with Him there. I believe all the saints will be there, from Abel down to the last saint whose blood will be shed for Christ right up till the appearing. There are many abodes in the Father’s house, and there

are many families to occupy these abodes. The church will have its own peculiar place, the nearest place of all, and my reason for saying so is, that no family has the full light of God but the church. Each family has been formed by the peculiar way in which God has made Himself known to it ; but to no family, except the church, has the full light of God been given. The church has all the light, and more, than all the other families put together have, it is to be filled unto all the fulness of God. No family, except the church, has been formed by the light that has come in the Person of the Son. And though all the redeemed will be sons before God, for they are sons of the resurrection, and also are in relationship with God through Christ, still I do not think that any can be in the near place in which the church will be, for we are Christ's body and bride. We shall be with Christ in the Father's house ; He the Firstborn among many brethren, but we His brethren in that home of love.

But there is another thought connected with this, and that is, that the glorified saints form the Father's kingdom, in which the Son and the sons of God are as subjects. The Father's house and the Father's kingdom are substantially the same thing ; that is to say, the sphere is the same, and those who compose the house are the same persons who are subjects of the kingdom. It was for the coming

of this kingdom the disciples were taught to pray. Jesus said to them, "When ye pray say, Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come" (Luke xi. 2).

The present kingdom, that of the Son of His love, which is held by the Son upon the Father's throne, will be given up, *as far as we are concerned*, at the appearing ; the kingdom of heaven continues throughout the age to come, only in the age to come it will be a public thing, and will then embrace the whole world. Now a man has to enter into it by conversion and submission to Christ as Lord ; then it will take under its beneficent influence every man upon earth. Then there will be no entering it, for the power of it will fill the whole world. But in the age to come we shall not be under the reign of Christ. When he gets His own throne we reign with Him. The overcomer has the promise of sitting with Christ in His throne, even as He overcame, and is set down with His Father in His throne. It is for this reason I say that *as regards us* the kingdom ruled over by the Son of the Father's love will be given up. The Son and all the sons brought to glory will be as subjects in the Father's kingdom. Over this kingdom no one rules or exercises authority but the Father. This kingdom is the heavenly side of the universe which is to be gathered together under the headship of Christ. The world to come has both a heavenly and an

earthly side. One aspect of the heavenly side is that of the Father's house and kingdom, in which there can be no taint of evil. Indeed if such a thing could enter, it never could be put out, for evil can only be purged out by judgment, and there no judgment can be executed, for "The Father judgeth no man."

I want the reader to grasp this great truth clearly. Christ is the One who will bring this heavenly condition of blessing into existence. He is the One who will effect everything for God. Everything will not be perfected until the finish of His reign, but the kingdom of the Father is the first instalment of that great moral universe in which God will be all in all. To-day He is bringing many sons to glory ; the Father has given them to Him, that He may bring them there. Our calling is heavenly ; and the meaning of that is, that in the age to come we shall have this heavenly position of which I have been speaking. We are to be sons before the face of God, but Christ is Firstborn among many brethren ; we are to be His companions when He sits upon His throne, but He is to be anointed with the oil of gladness *above* His companions.

Now I wish to speak of the lower or earthly side of that same age to come. The Father has appointed the Son a kingdom and a throne, and when He takes the throne we shall reign with Him

over the earth. The angels will, at the close of the present age, gather out of the kingdom, in its present aspect, all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and will cast them into a furnace of fire (Matt. xiii. 41). The devil has introduced into the kingdom, in its present form, those who are his children, and who have no business there ; and these will be gathered out by angelic means, and when this is done the public reign of Christ over the earth will commence. But the earth will be ruled from the Father's house or kingdom, that is, it is those who compose that heavenly company who will exercise all authority and power upon earth. The closing words of the last Old Testament prophet are, that the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings. This is clearly the coming of Christ to reign ; but then also the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matt. xiii. 43). The Son of God is the Sun of righteousness, and the sons of God are the sons of righteousness, and under such beneficent rule, the subjugation of this world will be commenced. A great deal of rebellion will, after this reign has begun, still be slumbering in the bosom of men, who will be tasting of the peace and blessing brought in by His gracious sway, and all this must be put down. The Son of God upon His throne (Ps. ii.), and the sons of God His companions, will shepherd the nations with a rod of iron during

1,000 years while the devil is imprisoned in the abyss. All rule and all authority and power will be crushed, and every enemy put under the feet of the Man Jesus Christ; death itself will eventually be destroyed, and everything will undergo a change by the power of Christ, and thus the earthly sphere will be brought into accord with the heavenly, and the earthly kingdom will be delivered up to Him who is God and Father, that God may be all in all. The Father's house will then embrace heaven and earth. All the different families—I suppose all intelligences—will have their abode in that wealthy place, and the Son will be in subjection to Him whose power He had wielded during His reign, and the kingdom will then embrace the universe.

Some objections might be taken to the idea of a kingdom in which the subjects are also in the relationship of sons, but this comes from the lack of having the truth balanced in the soul; the One who is our Father is also our God, and however highly He may have exalted us, we never cease to be creatures;* and we must also bear in mind that during the thousand years the kingdom of the Father does not embrace, as far as men have part in it, more than the sons of God who have been

* This is only true of us, not of the Son who is the Creator; but having taken a place in creation, He is ever in the place of subjection to God. He is First-born of all creation, and will ever remain so.

brought to glory; then the righteous shine forth as the sun. As far as this heavenly sphere is concerned I do not think there is much alteration, if any, between the coming age and the eternal state. Everything in eternity will be in suitability to God, and therefore in a state of changeless perfection. Authority, of course, must be centred somewhere, and as the Son delivers up the kingdom—the earthly kingdom—to the Father, I should be inclined to think that He accepts it from His hands, and that it becomes His who is God and Father; and I am confirmed in this thought by the fact that the Son is then in subjection to Him, who put all things under His feet. The Son never loses His place as Head over all things and First-born of all creation, but even in this place He is in subjection; but as God shall be then all in all He retains His place in the Godhead, God over all, blessed for ever.

Another aspect of this glorious scene I must speak of. I refer to the house of God. As the Father's house is where God is known as Father, and in the bosom of which every family has its eternal abiding-place, so the house of God is that sphere which is filled by His fulness, pervaded by His holy love, and where he displays "the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 7). The kingdom of God, and the kingdom of the Father, and the

house of God, and the Father's house, are, when everything is perfected, only different aspects of the same thing. But the house and kingdom of God have a present existence. The kingdom of God has come, and is preached. You get it preached all through the Acts ; but inasmuch as it is spoken of as righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, the proof is given that it abides to eternity. And as to the house of God, though we are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. ii. 22), in its widest aspect it will take in all things (Heb. iii. 4), and the church is that in a special way in the eternal state. (Rev. xxi. 3).

Christ as supreme in His own kingdom, and at the same time subject in the Father's kingdom, has a kind of analogy in the place in which He stood down here in the days of His flesh in subjection to God, come to do the will of His Father, and yet exercising the powers of the kingdom ; and had men received Him, the world would have come into blessing under His sceptre ; the whole human race would have been blest in Him ; God in His throne in the heavens would have been known as the Supreme Ruler, and His will would have been done upon earth as it is done in heaven ; the whole power of evil would have been destroyed, and the world would have been filled with righteousness, peace, and salvation. All this failed because of the sinful disposition

of the flesh ; but as we have been seeing, the day is coming when Christ will sit upon the throne of His glory, and when His companions will reign with Him, and everything will be put under His feet, with the exception of Him who puts everything under Him. Christ will rule the earthly kingdom as the Servant of God, and He will rule it in the fear of God. He will then be manifested as the Head of every man, indeed the Head of all principality and authority, but the "Head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. xi. 3) ; "Ye are Christ's and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. iii. 23) ; "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father ; for my Father is greater than I" (Jno. xiv. 28). In every official position He takes a place less than God, but when God is all and in all, office is at an end, though as Man He is ever subject.

I do not see why there should be any objection to the statement that it is the sons of God who reign. It is asserted that it is only as Son of man Christ takes the kingdom. I do not accept it. In Ps. ii. it is the Son of God who is placed upon the holy hill of Zion, and Nathanael confesses Him in this way (Jno. i. 49) ; and we get in Heb. i. 5, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son." To this glory of the Messiah, the scribes, who took upon themselves to teach the people, were blind ; they had no higher thoughts of the

Christ than that He was the son of David. But Jesus points out to them that David called Him Lord. The explanation was that He was Son of God. And the Lord told His disciples that it was *their Father's* good pleasure to give them the kingdom (Luke xii. 32) ; and the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of *their Father*. The righteous surely are the sons of God. What I understand by shining forth as the sun is, that in the government of the earth they exercise beneficent influence. It is so said of Christ : "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." The sun is set to rule the day, and in speaking of Christ as the Sun of righteousness the meaning conveyed to my mind is, that the grace in which He shines forth will soothe and heal the woes of His sorrowful and afflicted people, also of creation, and He will also lead in the ways of righteousness. But from their Father's kingdom the righteous will shine forth as companions of the Sun of righteousness, and by the influence exercised by them upon the earth the groans of creation will be stilled. But if they shine forth as the sun, it is in authority, rule, and power. It is not to be questioned that we have the kingdom of God, and of Christ, and of the Son of man, but Scripture is very clear upon the point that the One who is Christ and Son of man is the Son of God, and as Son of God He has the kingdom.

“Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows” (Heb. i. 8, 9). His fellows or companions are the sons of God brought to glory by Him.

One word more as regards this. In Rom. viii. we are said to have received the Spirit of adoption (sonship) whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Sonship involves glory with Christ, and for that we wait, as it says in the same chapter (v. 23), “Waiting for the adoption (sonship), to wit, the redemption of our body.” Our present place, as here in this world, is that of children, and the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God (v. 16). And we are assured that if we suffer with Him we shall be glorified with Him. Glorified with Him involves the redemption of the body and likeness to Him before the face of God in the Father’s house. But the apostle also speaks of a glory that is to be revealed to us. It does not say to the world, but to us. This I am inclined to take as the glory of the kingdom of the Father. I know the Lord has said that He shall come in His own glory, and in the glory of the Father, and of the holy angels. I doubt, however, if the glory of the Father in which He comes is the glory of the

Father's kingdom. I do not think sinful man, i.e. in flesh and blood, will ever see into the Father's house or kingdom. These things are, to my mind, eternal and unchangeable, and outside the range of the vision of flesh: they are the hidden things spoken of in 1 Cor. ii. The glory is to be revealed to us, and in the prospect of this the apostle made as of no account the sufferings of this present time; they "Are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed to us" (v. 18). I suppose it should be *to* us, not *in* us as in the authorised version.

But while we wait for the Father's house, and pray for the coming of the Father's kingdom as our sure portion in the age to come, creation waits for the *manifestation* of the sons of God; when as citizens of the Father's kingdom the righteous will shine forth as the sun from their heavenly position. They will dispel the frosts and darkness of the world's long winter, by the light and warmth and comfort of that house and kingdom in which they will have found a changeless, eternal, secure, and blissful home. Christ will take the kingdom over all that is under heaven, and His companions will sit down with Him upon His throne, and reign with Him. He will reign in righteousness and in the fear of God. "And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass

springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain " (2 Sam. xxiii.) The Son in the Father's house and kingdom will gather together, under His gracious sway, everything in heaven and earth ; the light of an eternal day will have dawned for every afflicted heart ; the summer of infinite, changeless, and endless love will fill with its holy, heavenly, divine, and quickening influence the vast realm of God ; and the glad heart of creation, instinct with life, will break forth into song, for the singing of birds will have come, and everything that hath breath will say, " HALLELUJAH ! "

It will not be perfection, but it will lead to that which is perfect ; for through the reign of the Son, as we have been seeing, the earthly sphere over which He will reign will be brought into accord with the heavenly, and creation as a whole will have entered into the rest of God. There will be no sea, no death, no sorrow, no pain, no crying. From the tabernacle of God, the bride of Christ, the dwelling-place of God, will go out His peaceful sway over a perfectly delivered creation, inviolate from sin. Every tongue will utter, and every ear hear, His praises ; every eye will look upon His face, and every heart beat responsive to His great love. In the Father's house, in the deep enjoyment of love, we shall never for a moment forget that God is our Father ; and as subjects of that kingdom we shall for ever keep well in mind

that our Father is God. There will be no fear of our forgetting that we have been exalted to the highest place of nearness to the Father, but neither will there be the least fear of the proud thought getting into our hearts that we are anything but creatures. May that blessed hope burn brightly in all our souls, and may the prayer of our hearts continually be, "Thy kingdom come."