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# Christ's Triumphal Reign

by H. M. Riggle

PUBLISHER'S COMMENT

H. M. Riggle was undoubtedly the premier apologist of the Church of God Reformation Movement. This booklet was written in the late Nineteenth Century or early Twentieth Century and originally printed by the Gospel Trumpet Company. In this work Brother Riggle presents the Biblical rationale for accepting the Kingdom of God as a present reality as opposed to a coming millennial kingdom. He explains the true nature of the Kingdom, identifies the Kingdom with the church, and explains that Christ presently rules over the Kingdom, the church, and all principalities of this present world. As with all Church of God teaching from this period, Brother Riggle presents the Kingdom from the Church-Historic position.

## CHRIST'S REIGN FORETOLD BY THE PROPHETS

The writings of the Old Testament seers are thickly sprinkled with sparkling prophecies relative to the blessings and privileges of the Christian dispensation. In many of the Psalms, David foretold how the Messiah would reign over Mount Zion forever. The term Zion generally signified the New Testament church. The evangelistic prophet Isaiah thus expressed it: "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment" (Isaiah 32:1). In the old dispensation, Jehovah was recognized by the children of Israel, and also by the nations about them, as the national God of the Jewish people, the ruler of the Israelitish nation alone. But it was foreseen that with the ushering in of the new dispensation, "He shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth" (Zechariah 9:10). "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: and in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one" (Zechariah 14:9).

## CHRIST'S REIGN FULFILLED UNDER THE GOSPEL

"Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:14-15). The time foretold by the prophets when the God of heaven would set up his everlasting kingdom and when the Messiah would begin his reign, Christ declared to be "FULFILLED." The kingdom of God was then "at hand."

That the gospel dispensation is the age in which Christ's kingdom and reign would be fully established, is proved beyond question by Jesus' own words, as recorded in Luke 17:20-21, "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Other translations render this last clause, "the

reign of God is within you." Paul makes this clear in Romans 14:17: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost." That all this is a present reality, is made clear by reference to Colossians 1:13, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and HATH translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." And again, "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 1:9).

These texts are decisive. Christ now has a kingdom, and a kingdom supposes a king.

### CHRIST IS NOW KING

Millennial teachers assert that Christ is not now a king. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? but that he will be in an age following the present dispensation. To admit that Christ is now king would be utterly fatal to their position. Mark well this fact.

Reader, be assured that Christ is king throughout the present dispensation. He was not made king by some legislative act, but he was born a king. When the wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, they inquired, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?" When Jesus stood before Pilate he said: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world" (John 18:36-37). Here Christ acknowledged that he had a kingdom. He terms it "my kingdom." Pilate at once asked, "Art thou a king then?" Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king." This is equivalent to: "It is true that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world."

He came to set up and maintain a spiritual government, and this government was established in and by the truth. All who love the truth will hear his voice and attend to the spiritual doctrine he preaches. Nathaniel, who was an Israelite indeed, and free from guile, addressed Jesus thus: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" (John 1:49); and Christ did not reprove him for thus addressing him.

At the time of Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem, "the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; saying, Blessed be the king that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest" (Luke 19:37-38). And "much people that were come to the feast . . . went forth to meet him, and cried: Hosanna: Blessed is the king of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written; Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold thy King cometh sitting on an ass's colt" (John 12:12-15).

From these texts we learn two things: First, that Christ, even during his personal ministry, had a kingdom; second, that he was then reigning as king and was acknowledged as such by the multitude of his disciples. They were not mistaken in this, for the inspired writer informs us that "all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass" (Matthew 21:4, 5). Thus it is an established fact that Christ is king. And if he is king he must have a kingdom, for a king presupposes a kingdom.

The evangelistic prophet Isaiah foretold the coming of the Messiah and his office and work as follows: "For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us" (Isaiah 33:22). From this it is seen that Jesus was to be king at the very time that he came to save his people. In that day the apostle said, "Behold now is the day of salvation." Therefore Christ was, and is now, king.

In Revelation 17:14, it is written, "He is Lord of lords, and King of kings." Again, in 1 Timothy 6:14-15: "Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords." From the foregoing scriptures it will be seen that even during the days of his incarnation, Christ was king and had a kingdom. But at the time of his ascension into heaven, when he took his seat upon the throne at the right hand of his Father, this was true in a greater and more comprehensive sense.

First, by means of his own death, which made an atonement for sin, Christ procured the almighty energy of the Holy Spirit in our favor, thus rendering useless and ineffectual all the operations of him who had the power or influence to bring death and sin into the world; that is, the devil. By Christ's triumphant resurrection from the grave, he broke the bars of death asunder; he destroyed the victory of the grave, and extracted the sting of death itself: he purchased for us, full salvation from all sin.

Just forty days after the resurrection, Christ ascended into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of the Father. Thus he was "by the right hand of God exalted" (Acts 2:33). "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus. Him bath God exalted 'with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior" (Acts 5:30-31). He is now "Prince of life," the "Prince of peace."

A "prince is a sovereign; the chief and independent ruler of a nation or state. Thus, when we speak of the princes of Europe, we include emperors and kings."--Webster. In Revelation 1:5, Christ is said to be "the prince of the kings of the earth." But why multiply texts of Scripture? All these scriptures positively teach that Jesus Christ, in this dispensation, is King and Sovereign of his church, yea, King over all heaven and earth. It is now that "we see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honor" (Hebrews 2:9).

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name." "Which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet and gave him to be the head over all things to the church" (Ephesians 1: 20-22). This is decisive. Christ is now king, the ruling head, supreme over all, the sovereign of both heaven and earth. "Our Lord . . . is the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Timothy 6:15). Not merely is he king in name, but in fact. In the Revelation Christ's kingdom is brought to view under the symbol of a white horse and its rider, "I saw; and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him and he went forth conquering, and to conquer" (Revelation 6:2).

The uniform testimony of all the foregoing texts proves conclusively that not in a future age, but when God raised Christ from the dead, he set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named; and hath put all things under his feet and gave him to be head over all things to the church. What could be clearer? We have the first thing essential to the establishment and existence of a kingdom--Christ, as a sovereign and king, the ruling head of the church, his kingdom. "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom" (Hebrews 1:8).

#### CHRIST ON DAVID'S THRONE

In order to sustain their position, those who hold to the millennial theory, claim that Christ is not

now sitting on the throne of David in this dispensation, and that therefore there must be another age, a period of a thousand years, in which Christ will sit upon the throne of David. Some of them go so far as to say that the throne of David will be reestablished in Jerusalem, and that Christ will there reign over literal Israel, when as a nation they will again be restored to their former glory.

To the natural mind this is a very beautiful theory, and appeals to the uninformed; but those who make a careful investigation of the truth of the Bible will clearly see that such theories are but the mere speculations of human minds, and in reality are not "founded on Holy writ.

In the first place, the literal throne of David never he reestablished. "Throne" can mean only sovereign power and dignity. Therefore, as David was exalted to this place of power and government in Israel, so the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the seed of David, would be raised up and exalted to a state and place of sovereign power, a king to rule in righteousness. This is all that can be meant by Christ's sitting upon the throne of David. If it can be shown that Christ now, during the present dispensation, fills this place; that Christ now occupies the very place and position that the prophets foretold, then the millennial contention will be refuted.

Open your Bible to 2 Samuel 7:12-16: "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever . . . And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever." As before observed, if we find clear evidence that in this dispensation Christ sits upon David's throne, then why look for another age in which will be accomplished what is now being fulfilled in this present age? Note the above prophecy. It was God's promise to David. Primarily, it reached its fulfillment in Solomon, who sat upon David's throne; but in it is contained a clear reference to the government of the spiritual kingdom--the kingdom of the Messiah. "I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." "Thy house and thy kingdom shall be established forever." This refers to Christ and the spiritual kingdom he came to establish. The "house" in this prophecy refers to both the temple Solomon built in Jerusalem and to the church which Christ established; for this is declared to be "the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." Solomon's temple was a type of the New Testament church. The real burden of the entire prophecy reaches its glorious fulfillment in Christ.

Now, let the reader observe that at the very time this kingdom and throne of David was to be established forever, it was said of David himself, "Thou shalt sleep with thy fathers." So instead of Christ's sitting on David's throne after the resurrection, as millennial teachers declare, this text proves that it would take place while David was still sleeping with his fathers. How beautifully this harmonizes with the New Testament declaration of Peter as recorded in Acts 2:29-30, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne." Here we have the application of God's promise to David. It referred to Christ and reached its fulfillment at the time of Christ's resurrection from the dead. David himself refers to this promise in Psalm 132:11, "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." It is clear that the prophet was here speaking directly of Christ, when he said, "Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." For this purpose Christ came into the world. Paul speaks, "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:3-4).

CHRIST NOW REIGNS

Instead of pointing to a future age for the fulfillment of these prophecies, the apostles clearly understood that they were to be fulfilled in this dispensation; and certainly we are safe in accepting the apostles' interpretation rather than the fancied theories of men at this present time. The fulfillment of this scripture as mentioned in the second chapter of Acts, clearly evinces the fact that in this dispensation Christ would sit upon David's throne. We turn to Isaiah 9:5-7, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." This is an illustrative prophecy of the incarnation of Christ, with an enumeration of those characteristics in which he stands most nearly related to mankind as their Savior, and by which his infinite majesty and godhead are shown. He is called Wonderful; wonderful in his conception, birth, preaching, miracles, suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension; wonderful in his person, and wonderful in his working. He is the Counselor that expounds the law, shows its origin, nature, and claims. He ever appears in the presence of God for men. He is the mighty God--"God manifest in the flesh"; the everlasting Father--the origin of all things, the cause of existence, the Father of the spirits of all flesh; the Prince of Peace. The government rests on his shoulder, and upon his throne in his kingdom, he executes judgment and justice; and the increase of his government and peace shall continue forever. To it there will be no end.

But when should all this be fulfilled? At the beginning of the Christian dispensation or at the beginning of a supposed millennial age? The answer is positive and clear. It was when a "child" was "born" unto us, when a "son" was "given." From this it is obvious that the reign of Jesus Christ on the throne of David, began in the days of his incarnation. And this is settled beyond question by the angel's announcement to Mary, as recorded in Luke 1:31-33, "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God, and behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Now do we have presented in this prophecy, two dispensations? Not by any means. The birth of Christ, his name, his throne, and reign, are all connected and must be in the same dispensation; that is, in the present one. This text refers to him as the everlasting head and sovereign of his church. His government and kingdom shall be eternal. Revolutions may destroy the kingdoms of the earth, but the powers of hell and death shall never be able to destroy or to injure the kingdom of Christ. His is the only dominion that shall never have an end. Here we have the glory, extent, and perpetuity of the evangelical kingdom.

All these scriptures clearly locate Christ's kingdom and reign as beginning at his first advent. It was when he was born into the world as a son that he became a king and established his kingdom. And this is identical with his sitting on the throne of David. The Jews well understood that Christ claimed to be the king of Israel, for while hanging on the cross in the throes of death, the scribes and elders said, "He saved others, himself he can not save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him" (Matthew 27:42). All these texts confirm the fact that Christ began his reign on the throne of David, even during the days of his incarnation. Being born a king, and clothed with all the authority of heaven, he began to deliver and to execute the laws of his spiritual kingdom. His authority was supreme. The people were compelled to say, "Never man spake like this man," and that "he spake as one having authority, and not as the scribes." But in a much greater and more comprehensive sense are these prophecies fulfilled since Christ has risen from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sent forth the Holy Spirit as his personal representative on earth, to execute his law and to point out the way of salvation.

This is clearly brought out by reference to Acts 2:29-36, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the

fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he bath shed forth this which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: hut he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

It would seem that this language is so clear that none could misunderstand it. Peter was preaching to the Jews, and assured them that the promise of God to David, sworn to, and confirmed by an oath, declared "that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne," that this Jesus "hath God raised up," yea, "let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God bath made this Jesus whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ." He is the supreme governor of all things, and all persons, Jews and Gentiles, angels and men.

#### HIS THRONE ESTABLISHED FOREVER

David said that Christ would be put to death. He also foresaw that if Christ were not resurrected, he would not sit upon his throne forever. Therefore it was necessary that he be resurrected in order to continue upon that throne. The prophet "seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell neither did his flesh see corruption." Had his flesh seen corruption, then the prophecy that Christ would sit upon David's throne henceforth, even forever, would have been nullified; but as his body did not see corruption, he continued to reign upon the throne of David. You see, the apostle here quotes the language of David in Psalm 132:11, and he presents the same to us as being fulfilled at that time, which gives us positive proof that this dispensation is the one in which Christ would reign upon David's throne.

We now turn to Acts 15:13-17, "And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets: as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: 'that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things."

The visiting the Gentiles and the seeking a people out of them for his name, you will observe, was building the tabernacle of David; and the throne of David was in the tabernacle of David. We then have Christ sitting upon David's throne in this dispensation, because it is in this dispensation that the Gentiles are chosen as the people for his name. "That the residue of men might seek the Lord, and the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord." Thus we find in the Old Testament declarations of this prophecy and also in the explicit language in which the New Testament citation of its fulfillment is expressed, the clearest evidence that could be desired by any one, that Christ now sits upon David's throne.

I will call the reader's attention to another fact. A careful reading of many of the prophecies of the Old Testament shows that "David" is frequently a title for Christ. This being true, it follows that if Christ sits upon his own throne, it must be David's throne. Since throne means sovereign power and dignity, Christ being by the right hand of God exalted, "when he raised him from the dead" clothed with "all power in heaven and in earth," and his sitting down at God's own right hand in the heavens, "crowned with glory and honor," "far above all principality and power, and every name that is named, both in heaven and on earth," he surely exercises greater and more universal sovereign power than David ever exercised during his earthly reign over literal Israel.

#### HE NOW REIGNS OVER ALL NATIONS

The distinctions between nations disappeared at the cross. Since that time, literal Israel is no more the chosen people of God. While the law and its blessings were to one nation, the gospel is good tidings of great joy to all nations in all the world. Paul positively declares, in speaking with direct reference to Jews and Gentiles, that "there is no difference." God is no respecter of persons, "but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." The Jews as a nation are no longer more favored than the Gentiles. They have the same privileges of the gospel. Salvation is not a national affair, but an individual matter. Every man and woman on earth must be responsible themselves for their eternal destiny. So if the Jews will believe on Christ and accept him, individually, the veil will be taken from their hearts, and they will be "grafted in again" just the same as the Gentiles. Thousands of them in the beginning of the Christian era did accept Christ, and the rest were blinded because of their unbelief. The Gentiles, as fast as they have accepted Christ and believed on his name, have been saved as well as the Jews.

It will continue thus until the end of time. Both Jews and Gentiles are placed on the same plane; both must come into Christ's kingdom by the door of repentance and faith; both must accept Christ individually, and all those who will not do this, either Jew or Gentile, will be lost. Now, all who do accept Christ, both among the Jews and Gentiles, constitute the New Testament church, or kingdom. Paul says that these children of Christ are the seed of Abraham, and heirs according to promise; "for if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed." This is the "true Israel of God." Let me emphasize this fact: the true Israel of God in the Christian dispensation, the real and only seed of Abraham, is the spiritual seed, the children of promise, those who are saved out of all nations through the blood of Jesus. This is the New Testament church.

And since Christ is "head over all things to the church," its governor, lawmaker, and "the king of saints," we see clearly how the Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled during the Christian era, in that Christ now sits on the throne of David, and reigns "the Prince of Peace."

#### HIS UNIVERSAL REIGN

Thus far we have considered the subject of Christ's reign chiefly from the standpoint of his spiritual work on earth, either in the hearts of his people or in his church as a visible organic movement. But there is another distinct phase of Christ's reign that it will be well to here consider. This is the universal phase. As before observed, Christ is now universal king, Lord of heaven and earth, "King of kings and Lord of lords," "authorities and powers being made subject unto him." Daniel informs us that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." In the present dispensation this authority and rule among the nations of earth is committed to Christ. He is "the Prince of the kings of the earth" (Revelation 1:5). In this sense the universe is recognized as his kingdom.

#### THE GREAT REDEMPTIVE REIGN

"As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even to the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall he destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him; that God may be all and in all" (1 Corinthians 15:22-28).

In the above scripture, the following truths are clearly expressed:

First, There will be a universal resurrection of the dead; "for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ

shall all be made alive."

Second, This resurrection will take place at the time of Christ's coming. "They that are Christ's at his coming." It would appear from this text that the righteous dead will be raised possibly a few moments before the wicked. It is thought this idea relative to the resurrection of the just is expressed in another text which states that they shall be resurrected "from among the dead" (Greek). Whether this be correct or not is not definitely stated. One thing, from Jesus' own language in John 5:28-29, we are sure that the final resurrection will be universal, including both "they that have done good" and "they that have done evil," and both will "come forth in the same hour" "at the last trump."

Third, With the second coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead, comes the end. "Then the end;" that is, the end of time, the end of probation, the end of opportunity to obtain salvation, the end of this world.

Fourth, With the resurrection of the dead, the last enemy—death—shall be destroyed.

Fifth, Christ must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet. From this we learn that Christ reigns while his enemies are being subjected, and not after their subjection. The last one to be destroyed is death, and the destruction of this last enemy will be accomplished by the general resurrection on the last day; for with the resurrection of the dead, death itself will be destroyed. This unmistakably proves that Christ's reign is this side of the resurrection, and not following it, as millennial teachers assert. This establishes the time of the great redemptive reign.

Next, our minds naturally seek to know what is the nature of Christ's reign, spoken of in 1 Corinthians. A careful study of the subject shows that there are many interesting truths connected with this reign, and one of them is brought out in the language of this head; namely, Christ's redemptive reign.

#### CHRIST TRIUMPHED OVER SATAN

For four thousand years, sin and death held sway over the entire human family. Satan robbed man of the "first dominion"; robbed him of his God-given privilege and right to have dominion over himself, the earth, and all it contains--the right to live upon the plane of God's own holiness and to enjoy felicity with him; As a result of the fall, sin, death, misery, darkness, and woe, yea all the suffering, sorrow, heartaches, and wickedness that have prevailed in all nations among all people down through the ages, were entailed upon the human family. Satan, as a usurper, became the "prince of this world," "the prince of the power of the air." He held all mankind under his iron hand; hence death reigned from Adam to Christ--spiritual death, which is the result of sin. Sin held dominion, and the law was too weak to deliver. At that time all were slaves under bondage; but in fulfillment of the many prophecies which pointed forward to a better day, a day of salvation and deliverance, when the power of sin and hell would be broken and a "King" would "reign in righteousness"--and the "Lord shall be King over all the earth"—Christ came "preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled; the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:14-15). Being born a king, beset up his everlasting kingdom of righteousness, grace, and truth, in direct opposition to the kingdom of darkness, and the result was that hundreds and thousands of souls were delivered through the exercise of his almighty power.

God "anointed Jesus of Nazareth, who went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed of the devil." Christ loosed the woman whom Satan had bound eighteen years from the bond of her infirmity. Not only did he minister deliverance to thousands of those upon whom bodily or physical infirmities had been imposed by Satan, but many who were possessed of demons, who were actually under the control of the devil, were gloriously delivered. Devils crying with loud voices came out of many that were possessed of them. To the penitent sinner Christ ministered salvation, saying, "Thy sins which are many are all forgiven thee." He ordained and sent forth twelve apostles, and again

seventy others also, with instruction to preach, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." "And he gave them power against unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of diseases." The seventy returned saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name." And he said unto them, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10:17-18).

While Satan is enthroned in the human heart, he holds the reins, and rules the man. This accounts for all the unrest, discord, anarchy, jealousy, envy, murder, and, in fact, all the wickedness that abounds in the individual life, the home life, the community, the state, the nation, and the world. The law was given to restrain wickedness until Christ should come. Satan must be cast out; not out of heaven nor out of the world, as some assert, but out of the human heart.

Jesus illustrated his own mission thus: "But if I, with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed, keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." The strong man who keeps the palace refers to the devil, who rules in the human heart. The stronger than he, who casts him out, is Christ.

From this we see that Christ came to earth on a special mission and that during his incarnation, or at the time of his earthly ministry, he set up his kingdom, and began his reign of righteousness in direct opposition to the kingdom of Satan, sin, and darkness. The result was that Satan's kingdom began to tremble and fall. Jesus compared it to lightning falling from heaven; that is, as a flash of lightning falls from heaven, so he saw Satan fall and his kingdom vanish. Then to his disciples, with all authority, he says: "Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19). This was the beginning of Christ's great redemptive reign.

Its object was to restore to man the very thing that Satan and sin had robbed him of in the beginning. But in order to complete this great work and make possible the salvation of a ruined world, it was necessary for Christ to go down into death and the grave, and then be resurrected triumphantly, breaking the bars of death asunder, which was really the great work of the atonement. Since then Christ has been vested or clothed with all power in heaven and in earth: power to fully save, sanctify, and redeem mankind from the last effects of the fall. By going into death himself, Christ "destroyed him who had the power of death, that is the devil" (Hebrews 2:14). Thus, man's redemption was sealed, and a multitude of captives were led forth to victory. The prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled in that the prison doors were opened to them that were bound. Thus, as expressed in Christ's own language, was "the prince of this world cast out." Satan's power was broken and Christ was raised up "a Prince and a Savior." In other words, Satan was dethroned from the high place that he had usurped and held for so many thousands of years, and the everlasting kingdom of God in Jesus Christ triumphed.

It would appear from the record of the temptation in the wilderness, that Satan foresaw this, and therefore made a desperate attempt to thwart and hinder the real work and mission of Christ. He took Jesus up into a high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them and said, "All this will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Some have said that there was nothing to this; that Satan was only pretending; but I believe a careful investigation of the facts will reveal a depth of meaning here that it is well to consider. This was a temptation to Christ, and a strong temptation at that. If Satan had been merely pretending, there certainly would not have been any temptation connected with this offer. My understanding of it is this: Satan being the prince of this world, and holding that position so long, well knew that the time was approaching when his power, authority, and kingdom would be broken to pieces by the power and authority and kingdom of Christ. He also knew that in order for Christ to accomplish his great work, he must suffer the ignominy of his own nation, be rejected by the rulers, and die the tragic death of the lowest criminal, the death of the cross. Now comes his tempting offer. It was virtually this: "I will simply give, or hand over to you, all that you came to accomplish, and will save you the suffering and death

through which you must pass; but I require one thing, fall down and worship me." This was a temptation, and had Christ yielded, Satan would have conquered, the whole plan of redemption would have been spoiled and the world forever lost. Thank God, Christ conquered. He says, "I have overcome that wicked one," therefore the salvation of the world was secured.

After his glorious resurrection from the dead, Christ ascended into heaven, "crowned with glory and honor," and took his seat at the right hand of God, upon a mediatorial throne, there to intercede for the salvation of men, and through the Holy Spirit, to execute the great salvation-work for which he had died upon the cross. Having ascended into heaven, he shed forth the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, when the Christian church as a separate, distinct institution, the visible organic form of the kingdom of Christ on earth; was established and became a mighty working-force in the world. Thus, the first great enemies destroyed—subdued—in the redemptive reign of Christ, which began even during his earthly ministry, were sin, spiritual death, and Satan himself, the prince of darkness.

Christ, having been thus vested with all power in heaven and in earth, made his church on earth "a royal priesthood"—a priesthood of kings (1 Peter 2:9). By washing "us from our sins in his own blood," he "hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father" (Revelation 1:5-6). The entire host of the primitive church raised up to the high plane of holiness, through the abundant grace of God and the gift of righteousness, were enabled to "reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:17).

#### THE CONFLICT WITH PAGANISM

At the time of the introduction of Christianity, a system of false religion was almost universal, and the world was held fast under its iron rule. It was paganism under the Roman government. Rome was the fourth universal kingdom that ruled the earth, and held supreme power when Christ appeared to set up the everlasting kingdom of God. Rome's religion was then purely heathen. As soon as the apostles went everywhere throughout the Roman kingdom preaching the gospel and planting Christian churches, Christianity incurred the hatred and opposition of this pagan system and its adherents. Thus a great conflict between pure primitive Christianity and the pagan systems of religion took place. This is brought to view in the book of symbols (Revelation).

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and beheld a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heavens and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was horn. And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three-score days. And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was east out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death" (Revelation 12:1-11).

The kingdom of God on earth was represented by the church of God, and it soon came into conflict with all the vile powers of heathenism enthroned in the Roman Empire. But the kingdom Christ established was destined to overthrow all the kingdoms of pagan darkness and to stand forever. It was that stone (Daniel 2: 31-35) which smote the iron kingdoms of paganism under the Roman power and broke them to pieces. In the above passage from Revelation, we have a woman clothed with the

sun, which represents the early church, and who is opposed by the great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns. This great dragon, which is easily identified by its heads and horns, symbolizes the Roman Empire under its pagan form. We notice that the church is set forth in a double symbol--a woman and her son--in order to show two phases of her existence during the great apostasy. The phase represented by the man-child who was caught up unto God, and to his throne" is that phase of the church which was cut off from the earth through martyrdom and persecution; while the phase represented by the woman who "fled into the wilderness" is that phase of the church which continued on earth, but was hidden in the great apostasy.

Next appears a great warfare between Michael--Christ--and his angels, and the dragon. This represents the early conflict of Christianity with paganism. The result is given in the following language: "And the great dragon was cast out." Christianity triumphed over heathenism. "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down . . . and they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death." Here we have the glorious triumph of Christianity during its primitive period, over the great systems of heathenism.

That this triumph did take place, all who are acquainted with the pages of history know. While the pagans fought with sword and faggot and beasts of the earth, slaughtering thousands of the people of God, the Christians went forth to battle with no other weapon than the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. And thank God, "they overcame." Those early Christians were consecrated, for "they loved not their lives unto the death." They gladly went to the chopping-block, to the amphitheater, to the stake; but they went testifying--that the blood of Jesus saves. And it is a historical fact that often with the literal slaughter of a few Christians, great numbers of heathen would be convicted and convinced of the truth, and turned to Christ. Then the time came when a decree went forth from the Emperor himself, that all the heathen temples should be destroyed, and Christianity became the universal religion of the Empire. Thus in the progress of Christ's reign, one after another of his great enemies were defeated. This began to fulfill the Psalmist's prediction, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Thousands and millions in those primitive times were saved from sin, raised up to the real plane of holiness, and reigned in life through the abundant grace of God.

#### THE BEAST AND HIS IMAGE DESTROYED

The next great antagonistic power to combat Christ's true kingdom is brought to view in Revelation 13:1-10, also in Revelation 17. This was the papacy--a false and corrupt form of Christianity. But finally, after a long conflict which covered a period of twelve hundred and sixty years, in which thousands of saints were martyred, and the woman--apostate church--was "drunken with the blood of saints, and with the martyrs of Jesus," the Lamb overcame this power, and she was made "desolate and naked." This, of course, refers to the fall of popedom under the great work of the Protestant reformers.

After this arises another power under the symbol of a two-horned beast (see Revelation 13:11-18). This is Protestantism, or the period of sectarianism and division. In a strict sense, the apostate condition of the church covers the whole period of the reign of popery, and also Protestantism, for the Protestant sects are none other than the harlot daughters of the great mother-denomination, Rome (see Revelation 17:5). And all these are included in the great "MYSTERY BABYLON." But in Revelation 18 is foretold the time of a great reformation in the onward progress of the kingdom of God and Christ's redemptive reign, in which the downfall of this antagonistic babel of confusion is declared, and God's people are called out of her. Here' we have the separation of the pure church from the whole realm and maze of apostasy, which is now being accomplished in the "evening light" age of the church. This pure redeemed church is brought to view in Revelation 15:2-3, "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over

his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

### THE GLORIOUS TRIUMPH

Notice that this mighty host of redeemed saints have the "victory over the beast and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name." Thank God, here we have the triumph of God's saints over false religions--the victory which is being enjoyed now in this blessed evening time. It will be further observed that this triumph gives honor to Christ and glory to his name, as the great "King of saints." This triumph of Christ's kingdom over the enemies of the church is further brought to view in Revelation 19:1-8.

Next, we see the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies gather together to make war against Christ and his mighty host (see Revelation 19:19). These are gathered together by unclean spirits of devils. It is a gathering of the remnants of all the false religions of earth (Revelation 16:13-14). It is the final conflict before the revelation of Jesus Christ from heaven, called "the battle of that great day of God almighty." All this maze of false religion is seen under the figure or symbol of "Gog and Magog." These will compass "the camp of the saints about, the beloved city," which represents the pure church in this evening time. The preparation for this great and final conflict is now going on, and already there is a confederation of the different false religions of earth against the pure church of God.

But He who has never lost a battle, who is sitting at the right hand of God, until every enemy is made his footstool ("for he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet"), shall triumph in this conflict also. For when these false religions are gathered together to strike one awful blow fire will descend from heaven and devour them (see Revelation 20:9). This to my mind represents the coming of Jesus Christ "in flaming fire" in his second advent. The devil, as well as the advocates and adherents of every false religion of earth will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10). At this same time the universal resurrection of the dead will take place, which will destroy the last enemy--death.

When the last enemy shall be thus destroyed, this particular phase of Christ's reign will have accomplished its purpose and will cease, for he will reign until every enemy is destroyed, which implies that when the last enemy--death--is destroyed, the redemptive reign will end.

But the redemptive reign of Christ has a two-fold purpose. Not only is it intended to destroy all the enemies and antagonistic powers of the church and kingdom, but to restore what was lost through the fall. Christ reigns upon a mediatorial throne for the salvation of a lost world. While the world lasts, Jesus as the Messiah and mediator must reign. His kingdom of grace and salvation and his reign during this dispensation is for the redemption of mankind. He is the world's advocate and Savior. In Acts 3:20-21 we read that "he shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you, whom the heaven must receive until the time of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." Christ's kingdom was established to restore to man the very thing he lost through the fall.

The heavens will contain Christ until the last trump is sounded; then Christ will leave the mediatorial throne and take the judgment-seat, when the world will be left without an advocate, without a Savior, without further opportunities of redemption. The numberless dead will all come forth, and the multitudes will be summoned before the great tribunal and stand in judgment before the great white throne. At this time "every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess to the glory of God the Father." Satan, the prince of darkness, with his myriads of demons, together with all the host of apostates and rebels who closed their probationary state in rebellion against Christ's throne,

will fall before Him and acknowledge him the "King of kings and Lord of lords." This will be the final great triumph. Then with an awful command, he will say to them on the left hand, "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting punishment," and they shall be "punished with an everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power."

Then Christ will receive the innumerable company of redeemed saints who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. These "shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air," and after this meeting, he will present them to his Father as the harvest, the fruit, the success and accomplishment of his death and resurrection--and great redemptive reign. This is the "restitution of all things." What God lost in the fall through Satan and sin, Christ now restores as a result of his great work and mission. What a day of triumph! What an hour of rejoicing! From the hour Christ was anointed by the Holy Spirit during his baptism in the Jordan and began preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, until the judgment scene is closed, the wicked punished, and the righteous rewarded, all things have been committed to the Son. The Father committed the work of redemption and even the work of final judgment to his Son Jesus Christ but when this particular work which has been committed to the Son is accomplished, Christ's reign, or this particular phase of it, ceases, and he delivers back "the kingdom to God, even the Father." The Son himself will be

#### PUBLISHER'S COMMENT

H. M. Riggle was undoubtedly the premier apologist of the Church of God Reformation Movement. This booklet was written in the late Nineteenth Century or early Twentieth Century and originally printed by the Gospel Trumpet Company. In this work Brother Riggle presents the Biblical rationale for accepting the Kingdom of God as a present reality as opposed to a coming millennial kingdom. He explains the true nature of the Kingdom, identifies the Kingdom with the church, and explains that Christ presently rules over the Kingdom, the church, and all principalities of this present world. As with all Church of God teaching from this period, Brother Riggle presents the Kingdom from the Church-Historic position.

#### CHRIST'S REIGN FORETOLD BY THE PROPHETS

The writings of the Old Testament seers are thickly sprinkled with sparkling prophecies relative to the blessings and privileges of the Christian dispensation. In many of the Psalms, David foretold how the Messiah would reign over Mount Zion forever. The term Zion generally signified the New Testament church. The evangelistic prophet Isaiah thus expressed it: "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment" (Isaiah 32:1). In the old dispensation, Jehovah was recognized by the children of Israel, and also by the nations about them, as the national God of the Jewish people, the ruler of the Israelitish nation alone. But it was foreseen that with the ushering in of the new dispensation, "He shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth" (Zechariah 9:10). "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: and in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one" (Zechariah 14:9).

#### CHRIST'S REIGN FULFILLED UNDER THE GOSPEL

"Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:14-15). The time foretold by the prophets when the God of heaven would set up his everlasting kingdom and when the Messiah would begin his reign, Christ declared to be "FULFILLED." The kingdom of God was then "at hand."

That the gospel dispensation is the age in which Christ's kingdom and reign would be fully established, is proved beyond question by Jesus' own words, as recorded in Luke 17:20-21, "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Other translations render this last clause, "the reign of God is within you." Paul makes this clear in Romans 14:17: "For the kingdom of God is not

meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost." That all this is a present reality, is made clear by reference to Colossians 1:13, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and HATH translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." And again, "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 1:9).

These texts are decisive. Christ now has a kingdom, and a kingdom supposes a king.

### CHRIST IS NOW KING

Millennial teachers assert that Christ is not now a king. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? but that he will be in an age following the present dispensation. To admit that Christ is now king would be utterly fatal to their position. Mark well this fact.

Reader, be assured that Christ is king throughout the present dispensation. He was not made king by some legislative act, but he was born a king. When the wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, they inquired, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?" When Jesus stood before Pilate he said: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world" (John 18:36-37). Here Christ acknowledged that he had a kingdom. He terms it "my kingdom." Pilate at once asked, "Art thou a king then?" Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king." This is equivalent to: "It is true that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world."

He came to set up and maintain a spiritual government, and this government was established in and by the truth. All who love the truth will hear his voice and attend to the spiritual doctrine he preaches. Nathaniel, who was an Israelite indeed, and free from guile, addressed Jesus thus: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" (John 1:49); and Christ did not reprove him for thus addressing him.

At the time of Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem, "the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; saying, Blessed be the king that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest" (Luke 19:37-38). And "much people that were come to the feast . . . went forth to meet him, and cried: Hosanna: Blessed is the king of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written; Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold thy King cometh sitting on an ass's colt" (John 12:12-15).

From these texts we learn two things: First, that Christ, even during his personal ministry, had a kingdom; second, that he was then reigning as king and was acknowledged as such by the multitude of his disciples. They were not mistaken in this, for the inspired writer informs us that "all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass" (Matthew 21:4, 5). Thus it is an established fact that Christ is king. And if he is king he must have a kingdom, for a king presupposes a kingdom.

The evangelistic prophet Isaiah foretold the coming of the Messiah and his office and work as follows: "For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us" (Isaiah 33:22). From this it is seen that Jesus was to be king at the very time that he came to save his people. In that day the apostle said, "Behold now is the day of salvation." Therefore Christ was, and is now, king.

In Revelation 17:14, it is written, "He is Lord of lords, and King of kings." Again, in 1 Timothy 6:14-15: "Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords." From the foregoing scriptures it will be seen that even during the days of his incarnation, Christ was king and had a kingdom. But at the time of his ascension into heaven, when he took his seat upon the throne at the right hand of his Father, this was true in a greater and more comprehensive sense.

First, by means of his own death, which made an atonement for sin, Christ procured the almighty energy of the Holy Spirit in our favor, thus rendering useless and ineffectual all the operations of him who had the power or influence to bring death and sin into the world; that is, the devil. By Christ's triumphant resurrection from the grave, he broke the bars of death asunder; he destroyed the victory of the grave, and extracted the sting of death itself: he purchased for us, full salvation from all sin.

Just forty days after the resurrection, Christ ascended into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of the Father. Thus he was "by the right hand of God exalted" (Acts 2:33). "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus. Him bath God exalted 'with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior" (Acts 5:30-31). He is now "Prince of life," the "Prince of peace."

A "prince is a sovereign; the chief and independent ruler of a nation or state. Thus, when we speak of the princes of Europe, we include emperors and kings."--Webster. In Revelation 1:5, Christ is said to be "the prince of the kings of the earth." But why multiply texts of Scripture? All these scriptures positively teach that Jesus Christ, in this dispensation, is King and Sovereign of his church, yea, King over all heaven and earth. It is now that "we see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honor" (Hebrews 2:9).

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name." "Which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet and gave him to be the head over all things to the church" (Ephesians 1: 20-22). This is decisive. Christ is now king, the ruling head, supreme over all, the sovereign of both heaven and earth. "Our Lord . . . is the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Timothy 6:15). Not merely is he king in name, but in fact. In the Revelation Christ's kingdom is brought to view under the symbol of a white horse and its rider, "I saw; and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him and he went forth conquering, and to conquer" (Revelation 6:2).

The uniform testimony of all the foregoing texts proves conclusively that not in a future age, but when God raised Christ from the dead, he set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named; and hath put all things under his feet and gave him to be head over all things to the church. What could be clearer? We have the first thing essential to the establishment and existence of a kingdom--Christ, as a sovereign and king, the ruling head of the church, his kingdom. "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom" (Hebrews 1:8).

#### CHRIST ON DAVID'S THRONE

In order to sustain their position, those who hold to the millennial theory, claim that Christ is not now sitting on the throne of David in this dispensation, and that therefore there must be another

age, a period of a thousand years, in which Christ will sit upon the throne of David. Some of them go so far as to say that the throne of David will be reestablished in Jerusalem, and that Christ will there reign over literal Israel, when as a nation they will again be restored to their former glory.

To the natural mind this is a very beautiful theory, and appeals to the uninformed; but those who make a careful investigation of the truth of the Bible will clearly see that such theories are but the mere speculations of human minds, and in reality are not "founded on Holy writ.

In the first place, the literal throne of David never he reestablished. "Throne" can mean only sovereign power and dignity. Therefore, as David was exalted to this place of power and government in Israel, so the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the seed of David, would be raised up and exalted to a state and place of sovereign power, a king to rule in righteousness. This is all that can be meant by Christ's sitting upon the throne of David. If it can be shown that Christ now, during the present dispensation, fills this place; that Christ now occupies the very place and position that the prophets foretold, then the millennial contention will be refuted.

Open your Bible to 2 Samuel 7:12-16: "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever . . . And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever." As before observed, if we find clear evidence that in this dispensation Christ sits upon David's throne, then why look for another age in which will be accomplished what is now being fulfilled in this present age? Note the above prophecy. It was God's promise to David. Primarily, it reached its fulfillment in Solomon, who sat upon David's throne; but in it is contained a clear reference to the government of the spiritual kingdom--the kingdom of the Messiah. "I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." "Thy house and thy kingdom shall be established forever." This refers to Christ and the spiritual kingdom he came to establish. The "house" in this prophecy refers to both the temple Solomon built in Jerusalem and to the church which Christ established; for this is declared to be "the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." Solomon's temple was a type of the New Testament church. The real burden of the entire prophecy reaches its glorious fulfillment in Christ.

Now, let the reader observe that at the very time this kingdom and throne of David was to be established forever, it was said of David himself, "Thou shalt sleep with thy fathers." So instead of Christ's sitting on David's throne after the resurrection, as millennial teachers declare, this text proves that it would take place while David was still sleeping with his fathers. How beautifully this harmonizes with the New Testament declaration of Peter as recorded in Acts 2:29-30, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne." Here we have the application of God's promise to David. It referred to Christ and reached its fulfillment at the time of Christ's resurrection from the dead. David himself refers to this promise in Psalm 132:11, "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." It is clear that the prophet was here speaking directly of Christ, when he said, "Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." For this purpose Christ came into the world. Paul speaks, "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:3-4).

## CHRIST NOW REIGNS

Instead of pointing to a future age for the fulfillment of these prophecies, the apostles clearly

understood that they were to be fulfilled in this dispensation; and certainly we are safe in accepting the apostles' interpretation rather than the fancied theories of men at this present time. The fulfillment of this scripture as mentioned in the second chapter of Acts, clearly evinces the fact that in this dispensation Christ would sit upon David's throne. We turn to Isaiah 9:5-7, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." This is an illustrative prophecy of the incarnation of Christ, with an enumeration of those characteristics in which he stands most nearly related to mankind as their Savior, and by which his infinite majesty and godhead are shown. He is called Wonderful; wonderful in his conception, birth, preaching, miracles, suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension; wonderful in his person, and wonderful in his working. He is the Counselor that expounds the law, shows its origin, nature, and claims. He ever appears in the presence of God for men. He is the mighty God--"God manifest in the flesh"; the everlasting Father--the origin of all things, the cause of existence, the Father of the spirits of all flesh; the Prince of Peace. The government rests on his shoulder, and upon his throne in his kingdom, he executes judgment and justice; and the increase of his government and peace shall continue forever. To it there will be no end.

But when should all this be fulfilled? At the beginning of the Christian dispensation or at the beginning of a supposed millennial age? The answer is positive and clear. It was when a "child" was "born" unto us, when a "son" was "given." From this it is obvious that the reign of Jesus Christ on the throne of David, began in the days of his incarnation. And this is settled beyond question by the angel's announcement to Mary, as recorded in Luke 1:31-33, "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God, and behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Now do we have presented in this prophecy, two dispensations? Not by any means. The birth of Christ, his name, his throne, and reign, are all connected and must be in the same dispensation; that is, in the present one. This text refers to him as the everlasting head and sovereign of his church. His government and kingdom shall be eternal. Revolutions may destroy the kingdoms of the earth, but the powers of hell and death shall never be able to destroy or to injure the kingdom of Christ. His is the only dominion that shall never have an end. Here we have the glory, extent, and perpetuity of the evangelical kingdom.

All these scriptures clearly locate Christ's kingdom and reign as beginning at his first advent. It was when he was born into the world as a son that he became a king and established his kingdom. And this is identical with his sitting on the throne of David. The Jews well understood that Christ claimed to be the king of Israel, for while hanging on the cross in the throes of death, the scribes and elders said, "He saved others, himself he can not save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him" (Matthew 27:42). All these texts confirm the fact that Christ began his reign on the throne of David, even during the days of his incarnation. Being born a king, and clothed with all the authority of heaven, he began to deliver and to execute the laws of his spiritual kingdom. His authority was supreme. The people were compelled to say, "Never man spake like this man," and that "he spake as one having authority, and not as the scribes." But in a much greater and more comprehensive sense are these prophecies fulfilled since Christ has risen from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sent forth the Holy Spirit as his personal representative on earth, to execute his law and to point out the way of salvation.

This is clearly brought out by reference to Acts 2:29-36, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he, seeing this

before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he bath shed forth this which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: hut he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

It would seem that this language is so clear that none could misunderstand it. Peter was preaching to the Jews, and assured them that the promise of God to David, sworn to, and confirmed by an oath, declared "that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne," that this Jesus "hath God raised up," yea, "let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God bath made this Jesus whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ." He is the supreme governor of all things, and all persons, Jews and Gentiles, angels and men.

#### HIS THRONE ESTABLISHED FOREVER

David said that Christ would be put to death. He also foresaw that if Christ were not resurrected, he would not sit upon his throne forever. Therefore it was necessary that he be resurrected in order to continue upon that throne. The prophet "seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell neither did his flesh see corruption." Had his flesh seen corruption, then the prophecy that Christ would sit upon David's throne henceforth, even forever, would have been nullified; but as his body did not see corruption, he continued to reign upon the throne of David. You see, the apostle here quotes the language of David in Psalm 132:11, and he presents the same to us as being fulfilled at that time, which gives us positive proof that this dispensation is the one in which Christ would reign upon David's throne.

We now turn to Acts 15:13-17, "And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets: as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: 'that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things."

The visiting the Gentiles and the seeking a people out of them for his name, you will observe, was building the tabernacle of David; and the throne of David was in the tabernacle of David. We then have Christ sitting upon David's throne in this dispensation, because it is in this dispensation that the Gentiles are chosen as the people for his name. "That the residue of men might seek the Lord, and the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord." Thus we find in the Old Testament declarations of this prophecy and also in the explicit language in which the New Testament citation of its fulfillment is expressed, the clearest evidence that could be desired by any one, that Christ now sits upon David's throne.

I will call the reader's attention to another fact. A careful reading of many of the prophecies of the Old Testament shows that "David" is frequently a title for Christ. This being true, it follows that if Christ sits upon his own throne, it must be David's throne. Since throne means sovereign power and dignity, Christ being by the right hand of God exalted, "when he raised him from the dead" clothed with "all power in heaven and in earth," and his sitting down at God's own right hand in the heavens, "crowned with glory and honor," "far above all principality and power, and every name that is named, both in heaven and on earth," he surely exercises greater and more universal sovereign power than David ever exercised during his earthly reign over literal Israel.

#### HE NOW REIGNS OVER ALL NATIONS

The distinctions between nations disappeared at the cross. Since that time, literal Israel is no more the chosen people of God. While the law and its blessings were to one nation, the gospel is good tidings of great joy to all nations in all the world. Paul positively declares, in speaking with direct reference to Jews and Gentiles, that "there is no difference." God is no respecter of persons, "but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." The Jews as a nation are no longer more favored than the Gentiles. They have the same privileges of the gospel. Salvation is not a national affair, but an individual matter. Every man and woman on earth must be responsible themselves for their eternal destiny. So if the Jews will believe on Christ and accept him, individually, the veil will be taken from their hearts, and they will be "grafted in again" just the same as the Gentiles. Thousands of them in the beginning of the Christian era did accept Christ, and the rest were blinded because of their unbelief. The Gentiles, as fast as they have accepted Christ and believed on his name, have been saved as well as the Jews.

It will continue thus until the end of time. Both Jews and Gentiles are placed on the same plane; both must come into Christ's kingdom by the door of repentance and faith; both must accept Christ individually, and all those who will not do this, either Jew or Gentile, will be lost. Now, all who do accept Christ, both among the Jews and Gentiles, constitute the New Testament church, or kingdom. Paul says that these children of Christ are the seed of Abraham, and heirs according to promise; "for if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed." This is the "true Israel of God." Let me emphasize this fact: the true Israel of God in the Christian dispensation, the real and only seed of Abraham, is the spiritual seed, the children of promise, those who are saved out of all nations through the blood of Jesus. This is the New Testament church.

And since Christ is "head over all things to the church," its governor, lawmaker, and "the king of saints," we see clearly how the Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled during the Christian era, in that Christ now sits on the throne of David, and reigns "the Prince of Peace."

#### HIS UNIVERSAL REIGN

Thus far we have considered the subject of Christ's reign chiefly from the standpoint of his spiritual work on earth, either in the hearts of his people or in his church as a visible organic movement. But there is another distinct phase of Christ's reign that it will be well to here consider. This is the universal phase. As before observed, Christ is now universal king, Lord of heaven and earth, "King of kings and Lord of lords," "authorities and powers being made subject unto him." Daniel informs us that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." In the present dispensation this authority and rule among the nations of earth is committed to Christ. He is "the Prince of the kings of the earth" (Revelation 1:5). In this sense the universe is recognized as his kingdom.

#### THE GREAT REDEMPTIVE REIGN

"As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even to the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall he destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him; that God may be all and in all" (1 Corinthians 15:22-28).

In the above scripture, the following truths are clearly expressed:

First, There will be a universal resurrection of the dead; "for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Second, This resurrection will take place at the time of Christ's coming. "They that are Christ's at his coming." It would appear from this text that the righteous dead will be raised possibly a few moments before the wicked. It is thought this idea relative to the resurrection of the just is expressed in another text which states that they shall be resurrected "from among the dead" (Greek). Whether this be correct or not is not definitely stated. One thing, from Jesus' own language in John 5:28-29, we are sure that the final resurrection will be universal, including both "they that have done good" and "they that have done evil," and both will "come forth in the same hour" "at the last trump."

Third, With the second coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead, comes the end. "Then the end;" that is, the end of time, the end of probation, the end of opportunity to obtain salvation, the end of this world.

Fourth, With the resurrection of the dead, the last enemy—death—shall be destroyed.

Fifth, Christ must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet. From this we learn that Christ reigns while his enemies are being subjected, and not after their subjection. The last one to be destroyed is death, and the destruction of this last enemy will be accomplished by the general resurrection on the last day; for with the resurrection of the dead, death itself will be destroyed. This unmistakably proves that Christ's reign is this side of the resurrection, and not following it, as millennial teachers assert. This establishes the time of the great redemptive reign.

Next, our minds naturally seek to know what is the nature of Christ's reign, spoken of in 1 Corinthians. A careful study of the subject shows that there are many interesting truths connected with this reign, and one of them is brought out in the language of this head; namely, Christ's redemptive reign.

#### CHRIST TRIUMPHED OVER SATAN

For four thousand years, sin and death held sway over the entire human family. Satan robbed man of the "first dominion"; robbed him of his God-given privilege and right to have dominion over himself, the earth, and all it contains--the right to live upon the plane of God's own holiness and to enjoy felicity with him; As a result of the fall, sin, death, misery, darkness, and woe, yea all the suffering, sorrow, heartaches, and wickedness that have prevailed in all nations among all people down through the ages, were entailed upon the human family. Satan, as a usurper, became the "prince of this world," "the prince of the power of the air." He held all mankind under his iron hand; hence death reigned from Adam to Christ--spiritual death, which is the result of sin. Sin held dominion, and the law was too weak to deliver. At that time all were slaves under bondage; but in fulfillment of the many prophecies which pointed forward to a better day, a day of salvation and deliverance, when the power of sin and hell would be broken and a "King" would "reign in righteousness"--and the "Lord shall be King over all the earth"—Christ came "preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled; the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:14-15). Being born a king, beset up his everlasting kingdom of righteousness, grace, and truth, in direct opposition to the kingdom of darkness, and the result was that hundreds and thousands of souls were delivered through the exercise of his almighty power.

God "anointed Jesus of Nazareth, who went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed of the devil." Christ loosed the woman whom Satan had bound eighteen years from the bond of her infirmity. Not only did he minister deliverance to thousands of those upon whom bodily or physical infirmities had been imposed by Satan, but many who were possessed of demons, who were actually under the control of the devil, were gloriously delivered. Devils crying with loud voices came out of many that were possessed of them. To the penitent sinner Christ ministered salvation, saying, "Thy sins which are many are all forgiven thee." He ordained and sent forth twelve apostles, and again seventy others also, with instruction to preach, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." "And he gave

them power against unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of diseases." The seventy returned saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name." And he said unto them, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10:17-18).

While Satan is enthroned in the human heart, he holds the reins, and rules the man. This accounts for all the unrest, discord, anarchy, jealousy, envy, murder, and, in fact, all the wickedness that abounds in the individual life, the home life, the community, the state, the nation, and the world. The law was given to restrain wickedness until Christ should come. Satan must be cast out; not out of heaven nor out of the world, as some assert, but out of the human heart.

Jesus illustrated his own mission thus: "But if I, with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed, keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." The strong man who keeps the palace refers to the devil, who rules in the human heart. The stronger than he, who casts him out, is Christ.

From this we see that Christ came to earth on a special mission and that during his incarnation, or at the time of his earthly ministry, he set up his kingdom, and began his reign of righteousness in direct opposition to the kingdom of Satan, sin, and darkness. The result was that Satan's kingdom began to tremble and fall. Jesus compared it to lightning falling from heaven; that is, as a flash of lightning falls from heaven, so he saw Satan fall and his kingdom vanish. Then to his disciples, with all authority, he says: "Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19). This was the beginning of Christ's great redemptive reign.

Its object was to restore to man the very thing that Satan and sin had robbed him of in the beginning. But in order to complete this great work and make possible the salvation of a ruined world, it was necessary for Christ to go down into death and the grave, and then be resurrected triumphantly, breaking the bars of death asunder, which was really the great work of the atonement. Since then Christ has been vested or clothed with all power in heaven and in earth: power to fully save, sanctify, and redeem mankind from the last effects of the fall. By going into death himself, Christ "destroyed him who had the power of death, that is the devil" (Hebrews 2:14). Thus, man's redemption was sealed, and a multitude of captives were led forth to victory. The prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled in that the prison doors were opened to them that were bound. Thus, as expressed in Christ's own language, was "the prince of this world cast out." Satan's power was broken and Christ was raised up "a Prince and a Savior." In other words, Satan was dethroned from the high place that he had usurped and held for so many thousands of years, and the everlasting kingdom of God in Jesus Christ triumphed.

It would appear from the record of the temptation in the wilderness, that Satan foresaw this, and therefore made a desperate attempt to thwart and hinder the real work and mission of Christ. He took Jesus up into a high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them and said, "All this will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Some have said that there was nothing to this; that Satan was only pretending; but I believe a careful investigation of the facts will reveal a depth of meaning here that it is well to consider. This was a temptation to Christ, and a strong temptation at that. If Satan had been merely pretending, there certainly would not have been any temptation connected with this offer. My understanding of it is this: Satan being the prince of this world, and holding that position so long, well knew that the time was approaching when his power, authority, and kingdom would be broken to pieces by the power and authority and kingdom of Christ. He also knew that in order for Christ to accomplish his great work, he must suffer the ignominy of his own nation, be rejected by the rulers, and die the tragic death of the lowest criminal, the death of the cross. Now comes his tempting offer. It was virtually this: "I will simply give, or hand over to you, all that you came to accomplish, and will save you the suffering and death through which you must pass; but I require one thing, fall down and worship me." This was a

temptation, and had Christ yielded, Satan would have conquered, the whole plan of redemption would have been spoiled and the world forever lost. Thank God, Christ conquered. He says, "I have overcome that wicked one," therefore the salvation of the world was secured.

After his glorious resurrection from the dead, Christ ascended into heaven, "crowned with glory and honor," and took his seat at the right hand of God, upon a mediatorial throne, there to intercede for the salvation of men, and through the Holy Spirit, to execute the great salvation-work for which he had died upon the cross. Having ascended into heaven, he shed forth the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, when the Christian church as a separate, distinct institution, the visible organic form of the kingdom of Christ on earth; was established and became a mighty working-force in the world. Thus, the first great enemies destroyed—subdued—in the redemptive reign of Christ, which began even during his earthly ministry, were sin, spiritual death, and Satan himself, the prince of darkness.

Christ, having been thus vested with all power in heaven and in earth, made his church on earth "a royal priesthood"—a priesthood of kings (1 Peter 2:9). By washing "us from our sins in his own blood," he "hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father" (Revelation 1:5-6). The entire host of the primitive church raised up to the high plane of holiness, through the abundant grace of God and the gift of righteousness, were enabled to "reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:17).

### THE CONFLICT WITH PAGANISM

At the time of the introduction of Christianity, a system of false religion was almost universal, and the world was held fast under its iron rule. It was paganism under the Roman government. Rome was the fourth universal kingdom that ruled the earth, and held supreme power when Christ appeared to set up the everlasting kingdom of God. Rome's religion was then purely heathen. As soon as the apostles went everywhere throughout the Roman kingdom preaching the gospel and planting Christian churches, Christianity incurred the hatred and opposition of this pagan system and its adherents. Thus a great conflict between pure primitive Christianity and the pagan systems of religion took place. This is brought to view in the book of symbols (Revelation).

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and beheld a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heavens and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was horn. And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three-score days. And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was east out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death" (Revelation 12:1-11).

The kingdom of God on earth was represented by the church of God, and it soon came into conflict with all the vile powers of heathenism enthroned in the Roman Empire. But the kingdom Christ established was destined to overthrow all the kingdoms of pagan darkness and to stand forever. It was that stone (Daniel 2: 31-35) which smote the iron kingdoms of paganism under the Roman power and broke them to pieces. In the above passage from Revelation, we have a woman clothed with the sun, which represents the early church, and who is opposed by the great red dragon having seven

heads and ten horns. This great dragon, which is easily identified by its heads and horns, symbolizes the Roman Empire under its pagan form. We notice that the church is set forth in a double symbol—a woman and her son—in order to show two phases of her existence during the great apostasy. The phase represented by the man-child who was caught up unto God, and to his throne" is that phase of the church which was cut off from the earth through martyrdom and persecution; while the phase represented by the woman who "fled into the wilderness" is that phase of the church which continued on earth, but was hidden in the great apostasy.

Next appears a great warfare between Michael--Christ--and his angels, and the dragon. This represents the early conflict of Christianity with paganism. The result is given in the following language: "And the great dragon was cast out." Christianity triumphed over heathenism. "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down . . . and they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death." Here we have the glorious triumph of Christianity during its primitive period, over the great systems of heathenism.

That this triumph did take place, all who are acquainted with the pages of history know. While the pagans fought with sword and faggot and beasts of the earth, slaughtering thousands of the people of God, the Christians went forth to battle with no other weapon than the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. And thank God, "they overcame." Those early Christians were consecrated, for "they loved not their lives unto the death." They gladly went to the chopping-block, to the amphitheater, to the stake; but they went testifying--that the blood of Jesus saves. And it is a historical fact that often with the literal slaughter of a few Christians, great numbers of heathen would be convicted and convinced of the truth, and turned to Christ. Then the time came when a decree went forth from the Emperor himself, that all the heathen temples should be destroyed, and Christianity became the universal religion of the Empire. Thus in the progress of Christ's reign, one after another of his great enemies were defeated. This began to fulfill the Psalmist's prediction, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Thousands and millions in those primitive times were saved from sin, raised up to the real plane of holiness, and reigned in life through the abundant grace of God.

#### THE BEAST AND HIS IMAGE DESTROYED

The next great antagonistic power to combat Christ's true kingdom is brought to view in Revelation 13:1-10, also in Revelation 17. This was the papacy--a false and corrupt form of Christianity. But finally, after a long conflict which covered a period of twelve hundred and sixty years, in which thousands of saints were martyred, and the woman--apostate church--was "drunken with the blood of saints, and with the martyrs of Jesus," the Lamb overcame this power, and she was made "desolate and naked." This, of course, refers to the fall of popedom under the great work of the Protestant reformers.

After this arises another power under the symbol of a two-horned beast (see Revelation 13:11-18). This is Protestantism, or the period of sectarianism and division. In a strict sense, the apostate condition of the church covers the whole period of the reign of popery, and also Protestantism, for the Protestant sects are none other than the harlot daughters of the great mother-denomination, Rome (see Revelation 17:5). And all these are included in the great "MYSTERY BABYLON." But in Revelation 18 is foretold the time of a great reformation in the onward progress of the kingdom of God and Christ's redemptive reign, in which the downfall of this antagonistic babel of confusion is declared, and God's people are called out of her. Here' we have the separation of the pure church from the whole realm and maze of apostasy, which is now being accomplished in the "evening light" age of the church. This pure redeemed church is brought to view in Revelation 15:2-3, "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass having the

harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

## THE GLORIOUS TRIUMPH

Notice that this mighty host of redeemed saints have the "victory over the beast and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name." Thank God, here we have the triumph of God's saints over false religions--the victory which is being enjoyed now in this blessed evening time. It will be further observed that this triumph gives honor to Christ and glory to his name, as the great "King of saints." This triumph of Christ's kingdom over the enemies of the church is further brought to view in Revelation 19:1-8.

Next, we see the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies gather together to make war against Christ and his mighty host (see Revelation 19:19). These are gathered together by unclean spirits of devils. It is a gathering of the remnants of all the false religions of earth (Revelation 16:13-14). It is the final conflict before the revelation of Jesus Christ from heaven, called "the battle of that great day of God almighty." All this maze of false religion is seen under the figure or symbol of "Gog and Magog." These will compass "the camp of the saints about, the beloved city," which represents the pure church in this evening time. The preparation for this great and final conflict is now going on, and already there is a confederation of the different false religions of earth against the pure church of God.

But He who has never lost a battle, who is sitting at the right hand of God, until every enemy is made his footstool ("for he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet"), shall triumph in this conflict also. For when these false religions are gathered together to strike one awful blow fire will descend from heaven and devour them (see Revelation 20:9). This to my mind represents the coming of Jesus Christ "in flaming fire" in his second advent. The devil, as well as the advocates and adherents of every false religion of earth will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10). At this same time the universal resurrection of the dead will take place, which will destroy the last enemy--death.

When the last enemy shall be thus destroyed, this particular phase of Christ's reign will have accomplished its purpose and will cease, for he will reign until every enemy is destroyed, which implies that when the last enemy--death--is destroyed, the redemptive reign will end.

But the redemptive reign of Christ has a two-fold purpose. Not only is it intended to destroy all the enemies and antagonistic powers of the church and kingdom, but to restore what was lost through the fall. Christ reigns upon a mediatorial throne for the salvation of a lost world. While the world lasts, Jesus as the Messiah and mediator must reign. His kingdom of grace and salvation and his reign during this dispensation is for the redemption of mankind. He is the world's advocate and Savior. In Acts 3:20-21 we read that "he shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you, whom the heaven must receive until the time of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." Christ's kingdom was established to restore to man the very thing he lost through the fall.

The heavens will contain Christ until the last trump is sounded; then Christ will leave the mediatorial throne and take the judgment-seat, when the world will be left without an advocate, without a Savior, without further opportunities of redemption. The numberless dead will all come forth, and the multitudes will be summoned before the great tribunal and stand in judgment before the great white throne. At this time "every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess to the glory of God the Father." Satan, the prince of darkness, with his myriads of demons, together with all the host of apostates and rebels who closed their probationary state in rebellion against Christ's throne, will fall before Him and acknowledge him the "King of kings and Lord of lords." This will be the final

great triumph. Then with an awful command, he will say to them on the left hand, "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting punishment," and they shall be "punished with an everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power."

Then Christ will receive the innumerable company of redeemed saints who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. These "shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air," and after this meeting, he will present them to his Father as the harvest, the fruit, the success and accomplishment of his death and resurrection--and great redemptive reign. This is the "restitution of all things." What God lost in the fall through Satan and sin, Christ now restores as a result of his great work and mission. What a day of triumph! What an hour of rejoicing! From the hour Christ was anointed by the Holy Spirit during his baptism in the Jordan and began preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, until the judgment scene is closed, the wicked punished, and the righteous rewarded, all things have been committed to the Son. The Father committed the work of redemption and even the work of final judgment to his Son Jesus Christ but when this particular work which has been committed to the Son is accomplished, Christ's reign, or this particular phase of it, ceases, and he delivers back "the kingdom to God, even the Father." The Son himself will be