

All men exist under a threefold order of relations; first to the natural world; second to one another; and thirdly, to God: and the history of the world demonstrates, that to mankind in the aggregate, as to each individual, the knowledge of these relations is slow and progressive; that it is not incident to the infant child alone, but also to the infant family of mankind, to stop at these immediate and more obvious relations which subsist between us and matter; that mankind in the aggregate, as well as each individual have their physical pursuits; and that, therefore, the antediluvian period, characterized by the absence of all governmental arrangements, may with propriety, be called the physical age of the species.

Secondly, the middle period of the world's history is pre-eminently distinguished for high regard to that more remote order of relations, which subsists in great and populous empires, as the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian and Roman; during which long epochs personal liberty and personal security have been better established; and happiness which is the end of our existence, less fluctuating and certain than it was during the merely physical age, which passed before the flood. This may be styled the secular age of our species, concerning which the prophet says, "I beheld until the thrones" i. e. of those empires "were cast down." But,

Thirdly, Mankind have nearly exhausted the limits allotted to them for pursuits purely physical and political, and having, by dint of long experience, learnt the inefficiency of commerce and war to secure happiness, are now deeply inspired with a premonition of some great and incomprehensible change, the present nature of which time alone can fully clear up. This is the millennial or evangelical age of the world; during which the human race will enjoy great happiness, and that third order of relations which have been revealed as subsisting between men and their Creator and Redeemer, shall be fully investigated, developed, and enjoyed.

Let it not be supposed, however, that these observations are made merely to arrive at the trite conclusion that man is a physical, moral, and intellectual being; but for the important purposes of showing the chain of high and holy providences, by which the God of all mercy and grace, has long been conducting the human family to an age of virtue and happiness; also that he has done it by a course of physical and politico-moral experience, perfectly adapted to human nature, without which mankind would never, for any length of time, have remained either virtuous or happy; and this division of the world into physical, secular, and evangelical ages, is neither arbitrary nor fanciful, but is founded in matter of fact, and abundantly supported by divine