The three ranks are *mentioned in order of  
priority*, but this does not constitute their  
distinctive character: Christ is the *firstfruits*—this   
is His *own rank*, see Col. i. 18:—  
*they that are Christ’s* follow at His coming,  
who are the *lump* (as understood by the  
context, and implied by the term *firstfruits*),   
in the proper and worthiest sense,  
made like unto Him and partaking of His  
glory; then (after how long or how short a  
time is not declared, and seems to have  
formed no part of the revelations to St.  
Paul, but was afterwards revealed,—see  
Rey. xx. 4–6: compare also 1 Thess. iv.  
15–17) shall come THE END, viz. the resurrection   
of the rest of the dead, here  
veiled over by the general term, **the end**,  
—that resurrection not being in this argument   
specially treated, but only that of  
Christians. The *key* to the understanding  
of this passage is to be found in the prophecy   
of our Lord, Matt. xxiv. xxv., but  
especially in the latter chapter. The resurrection   
and judgment of *them that are*  
*Christ’s* forming the subject of vv. 1–30  
there, and **the end**,—the great final gathering   
of *all the nations*, of vv.31–46.

**the firstfruits**, therefore necessarily *the  
first* **rank:** and hence the word stands  
first.

**they that are Christ’s**] The same  
as “*the dead in Christ,*” 1 Thess. iv. 16,  
No mention occurs here of any *judgment*of these his *own servants*, as in Matt. xxv.,  
for it does not belong to the present subject.

**at his coming**] Literally, “**in**  
*his coming,*” as *forming part of, involved  
in*, His appearing,—which, as the great  
event of the time, includes their resurrection   
in it. It ought to be needless to remind   
the student of the distinction between  
this “coming of Christ” and the final  
judgment: it is here peculiarly important  
to bear it in mind.

**24. Then**] next in  
succession, introducing the third rank,—  
see above.

**the end**] **the end** *of all:* not  
the end *of the resurrection*, as some:—nor,  
*of this present world*, as Chrysostom and  
others,—which properly happens at the  
coming of Christ: nor exactly of the *Kingdom  
of Christ,* as Grotius and Billroth:  
but generally THE END, when all shall be  
accomplished, the bringing in and fulness of  
the kingdom by the subjugation of the last  
enemy, the whole course of the mediatorial  
work of Christ, the salvation of the elect;  
the time indicated by Matt. xxv. ult.:

**when he** (Christ) **delivereth up** (the present   
tense is used for that which is certainly  
attached to the event as its accompaniment.   
When is literally whenever, indicating   
the uncertainty of the time when)  
**the kingdom to God and the Father**, i.e.,  
to him who is God and His Father.—Then  
the rest of the section as far as ver. 28, is  
in explanation of the giving up the kingdom.   
And it rests on this weighty verity:  
THE KINGDOM oF CHRIST *over this world*,  
in its beginning, its furtherance, and its  
completion, has one great end,—THE GLORIFICATION   
OF THE FATHER BY THE  
SON. *Therefore*, when it shall be fully  
established, every enemy overcome, every  
thing subjected to Him, He will,—not,  
reign over it and abide its King, BUT  
DELIVER IT UP TO THE FATHER. Hence,  
as in ver. 25, His reign will endure,  
not like that of earthly kings, WHEN HE  
shall have put all enemies under His feet,  
but only TILL He shall have, &c.,—and  
then will be absorbed in the all-pervading  
majesty of Him for whose glory it was  
from first to last carried onward. It may  
be observed (1) that the whole of this  
respects the mediatorial work and kingdom:   
the work of redemption, and that  
Lordship over dead and living, for which  
Christ both died and rose. Consequently  
nothing is here said which can affect  
either (1) His co-equality and co-eternity  
with the Father in the Godhead, which is  
prior to and independent of this mediatorial  
work, and is not limited to the mediatorial  
kingdom: or (2) the eternity of His  
Humanity: for that Humanity ever was  
and is subordinate to the Father; and it  
by no means follows that when the mediatorial