These words do not necessarily affirm such a thing.  
They view indeed entrance into the kingdom from the  
side of redemption; or its connection with Jesus’ merits.  
But other passages tell us of a trial which Christ  
Himself will make of His people’s acts, when the question of each individual’s entrance or exclusion will be  
decided: 1 Cor. vi. 8-10.  
 “But what if the other reading, ‘they *reign* over the  
earth’ be the true one?” This would modify the sense  
but little. It can only be taken as a prophetic present  
used for the future. The future is confidently anticipated  
from that act of the Lamb. “It is already certain; for  
thou dost take the kingdom, and they in thee.” It is  
certain that the Church is not reigning as yet : 1 Cor.  
iv. 8-14. “They *shall be* priests of God and of Christ,  
and *shall reign* with him a thousand years” (Rev. xx.  
6). And this kingdom of Christ’s does not come till  
the seventh trump has sounded. (Rev. xi. 15.)  
 “Aye, but are not the departed spirits of the just  
reigning with Christ?”  
 Scripture never says so. The answer of Paul to  
the mistake of the Thessalonian converts sufficiently  
shows this. They imagined that the departed righteous  
were excluded from the kingdom; and they mourned for  
them on this ground. But the apostle, in comforting  
them, does not tell them that they were reigning  
already. He only informs them, that at Jesus’ descent  
from heaven they would be raised from the dust, and  
*together with the living be caught up to meet Christ in the  
air: after which time they would be ever with the Lord.* In this scene and song I perceive the elders’ resignation of the posts which they hitherto had held. They  
own the superior worthiness of Jesus, and of those  
whom He introduces. The elders are kings and  
priests without redemption: unfallen angels, whom it  
pleased God in His sovereignty, or for services rendered,